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**STORIES**  
**FOR**  
**SUNDAY AFTERNOONS.**

**FROM THE**  
*Creation to the Advent of the Messiah.*

**FOR THE USE OF CHILDREN FROM FIVE TO ELEVEN YEARS  
OF AGE.**

**BY SUSAN FANNY CROMPTON.**

**LONDON:**  
**JOHN CHAPMAN, 121, NEWGATE STREET.**

**MDCCLXV.**

BIRMINGHAM:  
JOSIAH ALLEN, JUN., PRINTER,  
COLMORE ROW



## INTRODUCTION.

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MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES,

You have often asked me to tell you Stories on Sunday Afternoons, about real people.

Sometimes I have wanted to read my own books at those pleasant quiet times; and have wished that you could be reading to yourselves, instead of listening to me. But you have often said, that the books which tell of the real people who lived long, long ago, and were called Jews, and who once had the Land where JESUS CHRIST was

born,—had such long puzzling words in them, that you could not read fast enough to enjoy the story.

Now here are the very Stories I have told you; and a great many more.

I have written them down, and had them printed, so that you can read them easily, almost in the very same words you have heard me use.

I found them all, except a few at the end, in the great Book that you have seen us take more care of than any other in the house; the Book that you have heard read aloud at public service, slowly and clearly, that everybody might hear and attend. Grown-up people have to listen to the words



of that Book, and to try to obey them, as well as children. You know that I mean the Bible.

We have most to do, now, with that part of the Bible called the New Testament, which tells us of JESUS CHRIST; and how he came to tell us the will of "his GOD and our GOD, his Father, and our Father," "in Heaven." He is our Master and Leader, as you very well know.

But the stories in this little book, are taken out of the Old Testament; and tell of the people that lived long, long before our LORD JESUS CHRIST was born.

Now if you turn to the first story, you will see what happened at the "very begin-

ning," as you call it; before there was anybody living in this country, or anywhere on earth, except in one place.

But remember, this book, like the Stories I told you, is only a help. As soon as you are old enough, and can read all words easily, you will find the real Stories, and many more, in the Bible.

Turn to it; read it; and study it.

The most wonderful Stories you will find in the New Testament. And there you will find the rules by which you, and we all, are to try to live, speak, act, and think.

He who brought them to us said, "IF YE KNOW THESE THINGS, HAPPY ARE YE, IF YE DO THEM."

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# STORIES

## FOR SUNDAY AFTERNOONS.

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### ADAM AND EVE.

A GREAT many years ago, GOD created the Sun and Moon, and Stars ; and this beautiful world. That is, He made them.

He filled the Earth with grass, and trees and flowers, and made all sorts of animals, and birds, and fishes, so that men might live comfortably on it.

Then He made a Man. He did not make a little baby, to grow up into a man, as He does now ; for when there were no other people in the world, a poor little baby would

have died in a day or two, for want of a kind mother to nurse and take care of it. But He made a Man.

And as He knew it would be very dismal for one man to live alone, He made a woman to live with him and help him.

He named the man Adam, and the woman He called Eve.

And God gave them a beautiful garden to live in. They were allowed to have any of the fruit that grew in it, as much as they pleased, except of one tree in the middle. That, they were not to touch. But after awhile, the woman saw that the fruit was beautiful to look upon; and she tasted it; and then the man eat some too.

Then God saw that they could not be trusted any longer in this beautiful garden.

And He sent them out of it; and told them, they must go, and plant trees for themselves, and dig the ground to make corn and vegetables grow; and they must work, and labour hard, for themselves, and for the children He would give them. And He told them they would often be weary, and sick, and at last would die.

But He did not take *all* His kindness away from them, though they had done this wrong thing. He clothed them with skins to keep them warm; and showed them how to get their food, in the country whither He sent them forth.

And He always watched over them in mercy, as He does over us now.

ADAM and Eve had two sons; Cain and Abel. There was nobody else in the world. Nobody else had been born then.

So, when Cain and Abel wanted something to eat, they could not go to a shop, as we can now, and buy some bread and meat and tea and coffee, all ready to cook. No! they were obliged to go and get what they wanted out of doors, as best they could; and it was very hard work, because there was nobody to help them.

So they were very fond of their sheep, and took great care of them; they could not afford to lose any, for they wanted the mutton to eat, and the wool to keep them warm.

But they could not live on mutton only; so, while Abel took care of the sheep, Cain



went and sowed corn to get bread ; and he spent his time in tilling the ground.

But though they were obliged to work hard, they were very happy, and they had a great many very pleasant things around them.

They knew that all these pleasant things came from GOD ; and they wanted to show Him that they knew it, and that they felt how good He was, to let them be so happy.

When we love anybody very much, who is kind to us, we like to give them something that they want, if we can, in return ; and if we can find something to give them, that we should rather have liked to keep ourselves, we always feel more glad afterwards, when we see they like it.

Now Cain and Abel knew, that everything that they had, really belonged to GOD ; and

they knew, too, that He did not want anything they could give.

But still they thought, that if they gave up something that they liked best, something that they wanted most, and gave it up to Him, perhaps that would be the best way of showing that they loved Him.

Now the things that Cain wanted most, were the ears of corn that grew in his fields: and the things that Abel loved best, were his pretty young lambs.

So Abel brought the first and the prettiest lamb he found in his flocks in Spring, and killed it, and laid it on a heap of stones, and burned it; and he called it an offering to God.

And God knew his thoughts, and that he did it because he was grateful for blessings; so He let Abel know, that He was pleased.

And Cain brought his first ears of corn; and did the same with them. But GOD saw that Cain did not bring them because he loved Him; but only because he thought he must do as Abel did; so GOD let Cain know that He did not want his corn.

And instead of being sorry, and feeling, that certainly, his ears of corn were not worth having, if they were not given with a good will; Cain was angry.

And Cain saw how happy Abel was, because his lamb was accepted; and he began to hate Abel, because he thought that GOD loved him best. His conscience told him, that it was his own fault, that his corn was not thought as good as Abel's lamb; but he was too angry to think of the only proper way, and, indeed, the shortest way to

make the next offering acceptable, and to make himself happy again.

One day, when the happy Abel was talking to him in his field, Cain felt so vexed to see him so happy, that he lifted up his hand, and killed him !

When Cain did this dreadful thing, he and Abel were quite alone ; and perhaps he thought nobody could know. But he forgot that God knew.

And when God asked him where Abel was, he answered rudely, " I know not ; " and then he said, that it was not his business to take care of Abel ; he knew nothing about him.

This only made his fault worse ; and God punished him by sending him away from where Adam and Eve lived : so that nobody

should see him, nor help him, nor feed him. He was to wander about by himself; and the other sons and daughters of Adam and Eve were not to hurt him, but they were to do nothing for him.

And Cain was very sad at going away. But Cain's wife went with him.

## NOAH.

AFTER a long time, a great many people had been born and grown up to be men and women: and Adam and Eve were dead; and everybody who remembered seeing Cain sent away was dead; and the people began to forget what a dreadful punishment Cain's was; and they began to grow careless, and did a great many wrong things.

And God was determined to destroy the

bad people; but there was one man who had three sons; and they were so good that God chose to save them.

So He told them to build a great ship, and make rooms enough in it to take in animals and birds, as well as themselves and their wives.

Now Noah,—for that was the name of the good man,—might well think it was very strange to build a ship where there was no water, and where the sea was so far off, that he could not possibly carry the ship to it when it was done.

But he knew it must be right, because God had told him to do it; so he set to work directly, and made the great ship just as he was told.

In books, Noah's ship is called an Ark.

Anything like a great chest, or box, that can be carried about, either by men and horses, or on the water, is called an Ark.

When it was done, Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, got into it with their wives, and took a few of all sorts of animals with them, and plenty to eat.

It was only shut up just in time; for the sea rose, and came over the land, and it rained, and rained, and rained, a great many days without stopping, till the flood rose so high above the tops of the hills, that every man and every animal that could not live in water, died. They were drowned.

And after forty days more, the flood went down again, a little, each day; till Noah felt that the Ark was not floating; it was resting upon something.

After a while, when the water had sunk a little more, he found out that it was the top of a hill, upon which the ark was resting; and he began to see the tops of the mountains; but everything was still under water.

But a fresh pleasant wind blew, to dry them; and presently Noah opened a window of the ark, and let a raven fly out; but the raven always came back to sit on the roof:—so Noah knew that the ground was still very wet. He sent out a dove the next week, but the dove came back too; so he took her in again, to feed her. The next time he sent her out, she came back with a twig of an olive tree in her beak; and the third time she never came back at all. I suppose she found a comfortable dry tree, to build her nest in.



So Noah knew that the land was nearly dry. And he came out of the ark, and all the animals came with him, and they went to the places they liked best; some to the woods, some to the fields, and so on.

Noah had been shut up in the ark a whole year.

When he came out, he felt that God had been very good to him and his sons, in saving them, when everybody else was drowned. So the first thing he did, was to make a heap of stones, which he called an altar; and he offered up some of the best animals he had left alive, to show that he was ready to give them all up again, if God wished.

And God was pleased, as he had been, long ago, when poor Abel brought his first lamb.

And God told Noah to look up in the sky, and see the beautiful rainbow, which the bright sunshine made against the dark rain-clouds that were going fast away: and He said, that when Noah and his sons, and every man and woman that should be born afterwards, saw that bow, they might remember what He was going to promise now.

And then God promised, that He never would destroy the earth again, with so dreadful a flood.

And Noah went away to his work very glad.

#### ABRAHAM AND LOT.

AFTER Noah and his sons came out of the ark, they parted from each other, and went to live in different places on the earth, that there might be people everywhere.

And after Noah and his sons, and all who remembered seeing the flood, had been dead a long time, the people began to forget why the flood had come.

And they began to pray to the Sun, because it gave them light and heat; and to the Stars,—perhaps because they shone so beautifully and moved so quietly, every night: and they forgot to think of Him who made the Sun, and the Stars, and everything beautiful round them.

But everybody did not forget Him; and there was one man whose name was Abraham, who tried to do all that he thought GOD wished him to do.

And GOD bade him leave his country and his friends, and go where He would lead him: and told him, that his children, some day,

should have the land where he was going as a stranger ; and that it should be their own ; and that all the people on the earth should be blessed by his children.

Abraham could not tell how his children should be able to make all the strange nations in the world so very glad and happy ; and he did not know how his children were to get the land that he was going into, for their own ; because a great number of people that he did not know, lived there already.

But he did know one thing ; and that was, that it must be right to go, because God had told him ; so he took his wife, and the few servants and cattle that he had, and set off, to go he did not quite know where.

And his nephew Lot went with him.

They settled down in what was then called

the land of Canaan; and now you must try to remember this name, because afterwards the people called Jews lived there; and though they gave the country many other names, they still often called it by its old name, Canaan.

Abraham liked the country very much. There were plenty of hills, and plains like great meadows below, with grass for his cattle; and though the weather was almost always fine, and hot, and dry, so that the grass dried up in summer, there were plenty of palm trees to shelter some patches of green, all the year round, and when his servants dug into the ground, there was plenty of water to be found.

The few stranger people that had lived in that part of the land before, had not dug

much for water, so Abraham and Lot had to do it for themselves: and the deep holes that they made to get at the water, they called wells.

They put a great stone, usually, at the top of the well, when they did not want to get water, to keep the dust and sunshine out, and they took pains to plant trees round the wells.

Then, when the tall palm and olive trees were grown, the men and the cattle used to come to drink, several times in a day; and when the sun shone very hot on their heads, as it always did at noon, they all came and lay down in the shade, and slept till it was cooler again.

So you see the wells were very useful; and Abraham's herdsmen, and Lot's herdsmen all wanted them at the same time.

At last there were so many cows and sheep and goats and asses and camels, that all wanted to drink at noon, that there was not room at the wells for them all at once; and Abraham's herdsmen, and Lot's herdsmen, quarrelled, who should take their cattle to water first, and who ought to wait.

Abraham heard of this: and he spoke to Lot, and said he thought it was foolish to quarrel about the water; there was plenty to be had for both, if they went a little farther off each other; and he gave Lot his choice, which way he would go.

So Lot looked about for the pleasantest part of the land; and he saw one broad level plain, not very far off, that had a river running through it, called the Jordan; and he thought to himself, that the river would save

him the trouble of digging wells,—so he chose the plain of Jordan ; though other people, that he did not much like, had built towns there already.

#### SODOM: AND THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM.

THE people that lived in these towns, near to Lot, which were called Sodom and Gomorrah, were not good.

They had quite forgotten about the true God, and how He expected them to be gentle, and kind, and sober, and honest ; and Lot did not feel comfortable among them.

At last, one day, he was startled by a message from God, saying, that if he wanted to save his life, he must come out of Sodom directly.

He hesitated a little, for he was not so



firm as Abraham, in his trust in what God said ; but after a little while, he went away with his daughters.

His wife would not come away from her home as fast as he asked her, but kept stopping to look whether anything was really going to happen to the towns.

Then fire and brimstone burst out from the ground, and from the sky, upon the people that were wicked, and the towns they lived in ; and rain fell, and a great lake was made, where once Lot had chosen such a beautiful place to live in.

The lake-water was full of salt and sulphur, and it burnt up the grass and everything round it ; and the fishes that swam into it, out of the river Jordan, could not live in it, they died when they tasted its waters ; so the people called it the Dead Sea.

This lake is still there ; and it is still called the Dead Sea ; and nobody lives near it, nor are there any boats on it.

Lot never saw his wife again.

People said that she was turned into a pillar of salt ; meaning, that the salt and sulphur covered her all over, and killed her.

And the wandering Arabs that sometimes cross that country now, say that there is still a rock in the road, in the shape of a woman ; and they call it “ Lot’s wife.”

Meantime, Abraham felt very glad that he had come into the land where he was a stranger, as GOD had bidden him ; but there was one thing puzzled him still.

GOD had promised him, that all the nations of the world should be blessed,—that is, made very happy, by his children. But he

had no children at all, not one! and how could the nations be blessed by his children, if he had none?

And he was getting very old; and his wife Sarah had quite given up hoping for a child: and indeed Abraham would have given up hope too, if he had not felt quite sure that what GOD said, must come true somehow. So he waited, in hope. He trusted. When people trust, in this kind of way, it is called having FAITH. Try to remember that word; we shall often come to it again.

And again GOD bade Abraham look up to the stars, and look at the sand on the sea-shore; and said, "So shall thy seed be!"

Can you tell what was meant by this saying? There were more stars than Abraham could count, and there were more little

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grains of sand than he could possibly count. But GOD knows the number of the stars, and the number of grains of sand on all the sea-shores, you know.

And GOD meant Abraham to understand, that this child, that was to come, would have children, and those children would have a great many sons and daughters, and so on, till there were so many children descended from him, that nobody but GOD would be able to count them all.

And Abraham believed what GOD told him, though he could not understand how it was to be.

And GOD was pleased with him, for his Faith.

---

At last Abraham had a little son, and he called him Ishmael.

But Ishmael's mother's name was Hagar; and though Abraham loved little Ishmael very much, he knew that this was not the child, that was to be the father of so many children; because GOD had said in His promise that Sarah should have a son of her own.

And after a long time, Sarah had a son of her own, and Abraham was very glad indeed, and he called him Isaac.

And Isaac grew very fast; and soon he was too old to be called a baby any longer; and Abraham made a great feast in honour of his growing older.

And Hagar remembered, that Ishmael, her little son, had grown to be a tall boy, some time ago, and Abraham had never

given her a feast. And she looked in scorn on the little Isaac. And Sarah saw her, and she was very angry; for she loved Isaac much more than Ishmael; and she persuaded Abraham to turn Hagar and Ishmael out of the house, and drive them away, now that the real heir to their house was born.

Abraham was sorry, and he did not want to turn her away, for he loved the boy Ishmael.

But God bade him send her away, with her boy; and said, that though Ishmael was not to be the father of the Chosen People, to keep His laws, and to remember Him always, while the other nations of the world would forget Him,—still, as Ishmael was Abraham's son, He would make him the father of a great nation. So Abraham was

comforted; and he gave Hagar a loaf of bread, and a bottle, made of goatskin, full of water, and sent her away early in the morning.

Hagar set off to go towards her own country, called Egypt; but Ishmael was still young, and he could not walk very far at once; and after they had wandered a good way, they drank up all the water in the bottle. Still there was not anybody to be seen. No water, no sheep feeding, no camels carrying burdens, nothing!

Nothing, but low shrubby trees; not even a tree that bore fruit, such as the date-palm.

And Hagar was weary; and she could not carry Ishmael, he was so tall and heavy; and he was so tired and hot, and thirsty, he could not go any farther; and he lay down to die.

And Hagar left him, for she could not bear to see him so ill, when she could not help him, and make him better; so she went a little way off, and prayed to God to help her.

And God sent a messenger to comfort her, called an Angel; and he bade her listen, and look round.

And she listened, and she heard the sound of water; and she looked, and there was a well close to her!

She sprang up, filled her bottle, and brought the water to Ishmael; and they both drank, and were glad, and praised God for His mercy.

And Ishmael learned to shoot with a bow and arrows, and he could kill the birds and beasts that lived in that wild part of the country, for food for himself and his mother.



After a while, he had children, and when they grew old enough, *they* had children; and at last they came to be called Arabs.

They never forgot quite all about the true God, as the other strange nations round them had done; but they did not keep all His laws, like the children of Isaac, of whom I shall tell you presently.

But what made the Ishmaelites, or Arabs, different from anybody else, was, that they never liked to live in towns; or to stay long in one place. They always liked to wander about, and pitch their tents for a time, in a place; and then take them up, and ride away again on their horses, or camels, as Ishmael had been obliged to do.

And the Arabs that are living now, do just the same.

I TOLD you that Abraham was sorry to part with Hagar and Ishmael; and so he was, very sorry, for a time.

But as Isaac grew to be as old and as good as Ishmael had been, Abraham began to care for him, more than for anybody else. He loved him more than anything else he had in the world.

Now GOD had chosen Abraham, from the time when he was a young man, when He bade him leave his family and friends and home, and go into a far country that He would show him,—because, Abraham was a good man.

That is, he had always tried to do what he thought GOD wished; and he had always been ready to give up everything he had, and everything he wished to do, when he found GOD required it.

And so he was more likely than any one else to remember the true God ; and not to allow his servants and children to forget Him, and to worship wood and stone, and the sun and the stars, as the other people were so apt to do.

But now he loved Isaac so very much, that it seemed very unlikely he would give him up to God, even if God asked for him. And God tried him, to see if his trust would still be firm.

And God bade Abraham take Isaac his son, up to a high mountain, away from everybody, and there offer him on an altar, as Abel had offered his pet lamb, long before.

And Abraham never stopped a moment, to think whether he would obey, and whether he could not avoid parting with his darling son.

But he told his servants that he was going to make a burnt offering on a mountain, and taking Isaac with him, he set off directly, without saying any more.

And when they came near the place, he took the wood for the fire, from the servants, and sent them back home, saying, he did not want their help.

And as he and Isaac walked alone together, Abraham felt very sad ; and he did not speak.

Perhaps he was thinking how the Promise about Isaac's children being many, could come true, if he was obliged to kill him before he was grown into a man, and had any children; but he supposed it would be true, though he could not think how ; and he never once thought of refusing to obey God's commands.

So he walked on steadily towards the place God had pointed out.

And Isaac said to his father, "Here are the stones for the altar, and the wood for the fire, but where is the lamb for the burnt-offering, Father?"

And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide Himself with a lamb, for a burnt-offering."

He felt so sad, that he could not tell Isaac just then, who was to be the lamb.

And again they walked on in silence.

When they came to the place, Abraham bound his son, and laid him on the heap of wood.

Now Isaac was quite old enough to have resisted his father; and strong enough to have broken the cords that bound him. But

you see how obedient he was, and how he let himself be bound and laid on the heap of wood, by his father, to be killed. He, too, knew that it was right to obey God.

But Abraham had proved plainly enough, now, that he was really very good and obedient; and GOD did not wish to have the lad really killed, so He sent His messenger, or Angel, to stop Abraham's hand when he had lifted it up with the knife in it, to kill his son. And the messenger said, "Look round, Abraham."

And Abraham looked, and he saw a great ram, or horned sheep, which had got caught by its horns in a bush close by.

And Abraham felt very glad; and he let Isaac loose directly, and they killed the sheep instead. He would have been ready to kill

all his useful sheep, I dare say, rather than hurt Isaac.

And GOD said, that now He knew that Abraham was really a good and obedient man: and that he really loved GOD with all his heart, because he did not refuse to give up to Him his only son.

And Abraham went home much happier than he set out.

And again GOD told him, that He was pleased with him; and that because he had obeyed His voice in this great trial, all the nations of the earth should certainly be blessed in him and his children.

## ISAAC AND REBECCA.

ABRAHAM had a great many more children after Sarah died, and he had married another

wife, named Keturah ; but Isaac was the eldest, and so he was to have his father's house and lands and cattle, and all his goods, after his father died, except what Abraham chose to give to the others while he was alive.

That was what always happened in those countries ; and so it was thought a very good thing to be the eldest son. Often the younger brothers and sisters had to work very hard to get enough to eat, while the eldest son had plenty ; but then, if he was kind, he would help them, and give them what he could spare, and sometimes let them all live with him, as they had done while their father was alive.

Sometimes, if the eldest son was not good, and obedient to his father, the father would turn him out, and say he would not call him.



his eldest son any longer, but one of the others should be treated as such; that is, a younger son should have all his goods when he was dead.

The right to have the house, and lands, and cattle, because of being the eldest-born, was called a Birthright.

Now Sarah, Abraham's wife, was dead, and Isaac had grown old enough to marry; and Abraham wanted to see Isaac's children before he died, that he might have the pleasure of thinking who would have his goods after his death.

But he did not like to think of Isaac's wife coming from any of the towns near them, where the people, you remember, had begun to worship wood and stone.

So he sent a trusty servant far off, to the

land where he himself used to live when he was a boy, to see whether there was any maiden among his own family, that was good, and willing to come and be Isaac's wife.

And away went the servant, with asses and camels, loaded with all sorts of beautiful presents, to give to the maiden, if he found any one that would come.

But, when he got near the place, he thought to himself, that perhaps, if he showed his presents, the maidens would think his master very rich, and it would be a very good thing to marry a rich man's son, and then, one would offer to come, not because she wished to make a good and gentle wife to Isaac, and would love him dearly, but because she loved the gold and rich things she would get.

Besides, the servant did not know how, if there were many young maidens, he should find out which was the kindest, and gentlest, and most good-tempered, if he said at once what he wanted; for they were all sure to try to seem so, that he might choose them.

So he travelled on till he came to a well that was near where Nahor, Abraham's brother, lived, and he sat down to rest.

And presently there came a young maiden with her water-pots; to get some water for the house.

And she looked very pleasant and good; and the man-servant said to her, "Will you give me some water?"

Now it was a great deal of trouble to get the water; but the maiden saw that the stranger was tired and hot and thirsty; and

and that his asses and camels drooped their heads as if they wanted water too, very much.

So instead of saying "No!" because it was troublesome work, she filled her pitcher, and offered it to him directly, and said: "Your camels seem thirsty, too, and you look very tired. Sit and rest yourself while I give them some water."

So she filled her pitcher again and again, and the camels and asses drank it empty again and again, till they had all had water enough.

Then the maiden asked the man to come into the shady house, and rest. And the man said, "But where is your house, and who are you?" And she told him that her name was Rebecca, and that she was the granddaughter of Nahor.

When the man found that she was the granddaughter of Abraham's own brother, he was very much pleased, and he thought that so kind a maiden would be just the wife for Isaac. So he took out of his bundles, a beautiful pair of gold bracelets, and an earring of gold, and gave them to her, and told her whose servant he was.

Rebecca ran as fast as she could to her father's house, to tell all about it. And her brother Laban came out directly, and begged the servant to come in: and he took off the burdens of the camels for him, and got some straw and food for the poor weary creatures. And the servant, and the men that were with him, lay down at the door of the house in the shade.

And their feet were very hot and dusty,

for in those days people had not found out, how to make stockings and shoes to keep their feet from the dust; and as the weather in that country is almost always very hot, they did not feel the want of shoes for warmth.

But they wore flat pieces of leather, underneath their feet, to keep them off the stones; and they tied these strange kind of shoes on, by long thongs of leather which were twisted round their legs; and they called them sandals.

So Laban's servants untied these sandals, and washed the feet of the tired strangers with refreshing water; and then Laban led them into the shady court-yard of the house, and offered them something to eat.

But Abraham's servant said he would rather tell his errand first.

So he reminded Laban of the story he must often have heard, how his grandfather's brother had left his home, because God had commanded him : and then he told all that had happened since ; and how he himself had been sent to choose a wife for Isaac ; and how he liked the looks of Rebecca ; and how he thought she was kind-hearted, because she had given him and his weary animals water, at the well in the evening.

Laban, and his mother, and Rebecca, and all of them, were very glad to hear of their uncle's good fortune ; and Rebecca had no objection to go to be Isaac's wife.

In those countries the wives very seldom see their husbands, even now, till they have determined to be married ; so it was not strange to Rebecca to be asked to go, without having seen Isaac first.

But her mother and brother and sisters were sorry to part with her so suddenly, and the next morning they begged the servant to wait a few days.

But he said he had been many days coming, and he should have to be as long going back again, and so he wanted to set off directly, unless Rebecca would rather wait a few days.

But Rebecca said she was ready to go; so her mother and brother gave her some presents and kind messages to Abraham and Isaac, and her old nurse got ready too, and set off with her.

At last they came to some of Abraham's fields, and there was Isaac, walking by himself; thinking, perhaps, that it was nearly time for the messenger to be coming back.



And he came up to them, and Rebecca got off her camel, and they went into the house together. And Isaac found that she was just as kind and good as the old servant had thought her: and he loved her very much; and was quite comforted for the loss of his mother Sarah, which had grieved him a great deal.

Soon after Rebecca came, Abraham died; for he was very old.

And Isaac became the head of his father's household.

#### JACOB AND ESAU.

ISAAC and Rebecca had two sons, named Esau and Jacob.

Esau was rough, and liked rough sports, and used to spend all the day out hunting

wild beasts ; and often he brought home deer which he had killed with his bow and arrows, for his father and mother to eat.

The flesh of deer is called venison.

But Jacob was a quieter man ; and he almost always stayed at home.

And one day he was chopping up some herbs to make pottage, in the house, when Esau came in, dreadfully tired and faint. He had been out hunting all day long, and had had nothing to eat at all ; and he longed for some of the dinner Jacob was preparing.

But Jacob was not a very good-natured man ; and he never thought of offering any to his tired brother.

And at last Esau asked for some.

And Jacob said, If you will give up your birthright (for Esau was the eldest son), you shall have it.

Poor Esau was so very hungry, he did not care for anything just then, but something to eat ; so he agreed.

And then the miserly Jacob sold his bit of pottage to his own brother, for the right of being master of the house when his father should die.

But Jacob knew, that it was not of much use, having cheated Esau, if he could not get his father's consent. For you know, I told you, that the fathers sometimes chose the son they thought was the best, to be called the eldest.

But Jacob could not think of any way to get his father to bless him, as it was called.

One day, after Isaac was grown so very old that he was quite blind, he asked Esau to go out hunting, and fetch him some veni-

son to eat once more, and said that if he brought it kindly, to please his old father, he would bless him that very afternoon; lest he should die before he had declared Esau to be his heir.

And Esau went away as fast as he could, to kill the deer.

But Rebecca had heard what was to be done when Esau came back. And she did not love Esau so much as Jacob; perhaps, because he was out at his wild rude sports all day, while Jacob was at home, helping her to look after the house and cattle. And she forgot why it was that God had chosen Abraham, and Isaac his son, and favoured them with riches and health and happiness.

She forgot, that it was, because they were good men, who tried to be just and kind to

everybody,—and always to remember, and do, all GOD's commands.

She forgot, too, that GOD would see if she and Jacob did wrong, and that He had said that He would punish those who did wrong, as well as reward those who did well.

And Rebecca called Jacob, and told him, now was the time to make sure of being master when Isaac should die; and she got a kid, or young goat, whose flesh tastes something like venison; and she cooked it as like venison as she could; and then told Jacob to take it to Isaac: and, as Isaac was blind, the poor old man would never find out that it was not Esau, and would bless him.

But Jacob's skin was smooth, and Esau's was hairy; so, for fear Isaac should ask to feel his skin, Jacob put the goat's skin, with

the hair outside, over his hands and arms and neck.

Though Isaac thought that Esau must have been very quick, to have caught, and killed, and cooked a deer so soon, he was quite taken in; and he blessed the young man whom he believed to be Esau, and said that all his brothers should be his servants, and that all his house and cattle and goods, should be his.

And Jacob came away from his poor old father, without being sorry for the falsehoods he had told, and the wrong thing he had done, in stealing his brother's blessing.

But when the real Esau came home, with the real venison, it was all found out.

And poor old Isaac was very sad, to think what a thief his son Jacob was, and that he

had blessed him ; but he had given his word now, and he could not alter it.

And Esau wept, and asked his father to bless him a little too. So Isaac comforted him as much as he could.

But Esau felt very angry at Jacob ; and as he went away from his blind father's room, he muttered, that as soon as ever his father died he would kill Jacob, and there would be an end to his troublesome false brother.

And Rebecca heard him ; and then she was frightened at the consequence of what she had helped Jacob to do. And she sent him away in a hurry, by night, far from home, out of Esau's reach.

So you see, Jacob had not long to enjoy his stolen pleasure of being master ; and

even if he had dared to stay at home, his conscience would soon have made him uncomfortable.

## JACOB AND LABAN.

WHEN Jacob ran away from home, for fear of Esau, he went to Haran, the country where Laban lived.

You remember Laban? he was Rebecca's brother, who was so kind to Abraham's servant, when he went to fetch Rebecca to be Isaac's wife.

And Laban offered Jacob a home in his house, if he would stay with him and be his servant.

So Jacob stayed, and took care of Laban's cattle.

But even after he had suffered so much by



his deceit, in being obliged to fly from home, Jacob had not learned to be honest ; and he cheated his uncle Laban.

And his uncle Laban treated him unkindly in return, which was no more than he deserved, though it was not right in Laban to do so.

At last Jacob could bear it no longer, he said.

So one night, he got all his things together, and fled away, taking his wives and children with him.

And he wished to go back to the pleasant land where his grandfather Abraham had lived : but between him and it lay the place where Esau had settled ; and Jacob was afraid to go near his injured brother.

But there was no other way to go ; so he

sent forward some men, with asses laden with presents for Esau, to try to please him, and to show that he meant to come as a friend.

And Esau was so glad to think of seeing his brother again, after having been parted so many years,—that he forgot all Jacob's ill behaviour long ago, and forgave him, and came to meet him, and to kiss him, and be friends.

And the two brothers never quarrelled any more.

And Jacob went and settled near where his father lived, who was still alive. But his mother was dead. He had come back too late, ever to see her again. Rebecca died, while her son was yet away from his father's house. She never saw him again after the day that she helped him to do wrong.

JACOB had twelve sons, and they all worked for him, and were useful; but he loved the two youngest the most.

Their names were Joseph and Benjamin.

And Jacob was foolishly fond of Joseph; and he made him a fine coat of many colours, to wear, different from the coats of the others. This coat was not made with buttons and sleeves, like ours, but it was something like a great shawl. Every man wore such things then.

And the other sons began to hate Joseph, because he was their father's favourite; and though he was as good and kind to them as he knew how to be, they only disliked him the more.

At last, one day when they were all out feeding sheep, Jacob sent Joseph on a mes-

sage to them; and when they saw him coming alone, they determined to kill him.

But the eldest, whose name was Reuben, was sorry for the poor boy; and he begged his brothers not to kill him, but only to let him down into a pit that there was, by the roadside.

Reuben thought to himself, that he would go away from his brothers, and hide himself; and when they were gone home, he would come out, and get Joseph safe out of the pit, and bring him home. So, while they were busy, letting Joseph down with cords, Reuben crept away unseen.

After he was gone, and while the brothers were still busy with Joseph, there came by a party of men on camels.

These men were Ishmaelites.

They had got sweet-smelling plants, and spices, and balms for wounds and hurts, and were going to sell these precious things in Egypt.

Judah, one of the brothers, said to the rest, "Look here! let us sell the boy Joseph to these men, for a slave; and then we shall be sure not to be troubled with him again."

When people were sold as slaves, they were kept, generally, hard at work for their masters, and were not allowed to go about, where and when they liked.

The Ishmaelites were willing to buy Joseph.

So his cruel brothers pulled off his fine coat, and sold him for money; and the camels moved on, and away, out of sight, towards Egypt.

And they dipped the coat of many colours into the blood of a kid they had killed ; and when they got home they showed it to their father Jacob, and pretended they had found it stained, just so, in the field.

And Jacob thought, that perhaps, when Joseph, went to give his message, a wild beast had met him ; and Jacob wept sadly about him ; and said, that his darling boy must have been killed, and devoured ; and he ~~should~~ never see him again.

Meantime, Reuben had crept back to the pit, intending to get Joseph out safely, for he had not seen the party of merchants buying him. But to his terror he found nothing in the pit !

Then he went back home very sad indeed ; and he, as well as his father, now believed

that Joseph was killed ; and the other wicked brothers never told what they had done with him.

Jacob took off his good clothes, that he usually wore ; and instead of putting on black ones, as we do now, when we are in mourning, he tore his good ones, and put on coarse sackcloth, made of goat's-hair, such as the bags for his camels were made of, and he put ashes on his head ; meaning to show that he felt very low and sad.

He never forgot Joseph, nor became happy again without him ; he only loved little Benjamin more than before.

#### JOSEPH IN EGYPT.

WHEN the Ishmaelite merchants who bought Joseph, got to Egypt, they sold Joseph again to a man whose name was Potiphar.

And Joseph tried to be good, and honest, and true ; and Potiphar liked him.

And Joseph did a great many useful things for him ; and at last, after a long time, when Joseph was grown up to be a man, the King of Egypt heard of him, and how clever and good he was : and the King sent for him, and took him to be his servant.

Joseph had had many troubles ; and had borne a great deal of hard unjust treatment since he had come into Egypt : but now, he was no longer a slave ; he was a free man, and King Pharoah honoured and respected him, and made him ruler over the land.

Joseph felt, however, that all this change would not have happened if he had not been good : and he tried to do every thing that he could, to make Pharoah and his people happy and comfortable.



For seven years there was so much corn at harvest-time, that the people did not want all of it: and Joseph ordered the men to bring to him all the corn that they did not actually want, and he stored it up safely in great houses which he made for it.

After these seven years of plenty, there came seven years, one after another, when no corn ripened at harvest time; it all died, and shrivelled away; and there was none to be had, anywhere.

Then Joseph opened the great storehouses; and let the people buy from the King, the corn he had so wisely saved.

And all the people of Egypt came to buy corn, at the city where Joseph had saved so much.

And the people of other countries round,

who had not been wise enough to save what corn they had not wanted, when there was plenty, now began to be very hungry: they had no corn,—nothing to make bread of: nothing to feed their cattle with, when the grass was burnt up by the summer heat.

But they heard of Joseph's stores; and they came from great distances, to buy of him.

Amongst the rest, Jacob, who was too old now to go so far himself, sent his sons to fetch corn out of Egypt.

They were all grown into men, now, but though they were grown and altered, they were known by Joseph the moment he saw them.

But *he* himself was so altered! he was so grandly dressed, and looked so rich and

powerful, with all his servants to wait on him, that his brothers never thought of his being the same, as the poor half-clothed boy, whom they had sold as a slave long before.

His very name was changed ; for Potiphar had given him another name when he first bought him, which was often done to slaves.

So Joseph's brothers came, and bowed very low before the great man, who ruled over Egypt, and had corn to sell, when every one else was starving ; and they begged him, very humbly, to allow them to have some.

But Joseph looked among them, to see how many there were of them ; and he counted only ten. He could not see Benjamin anywhere with them.

So he began to fear that they had done some harm to poor Benjamin, as they had intended to do to himself.

And he wanted to find out whether his father were alive; for he did not want to punish his old father, who had always been so very kind to him.

So he pretended to be angry with them; and said he did not believe they had come to fetch corn, like honest men, but that they had heard the Egyptians were poor, because of the famine, (that is, the want of food,) and that they were come to spy, and see if they could not do some harm to the poor, weak, starving Egyptians.

But the men bowed again, very low, till their foreheads touched the ground; and said "No!" Indeed, they were not spies. They were, what they seemed; poor men, out of Canaan; who were sent by their father, Jacob, to buy corn to make bread, that they

might have something to eat, and not starve to death.

Joseph asked if there was anybody else at home besides their old father?

And they said, yes; there was one little brother. And Joseph asked why he was not come too? And the men answered,—that he was a great favourite of their father's,—that they once had one other brother, but they had lost him a long time ago; and that since he died their father had never let the little Benjamin go out of his sight, for fear he should die too.

Joseph felt so glad to hear that his father was alive, and Benjamin alive and well, too, that he could hardly help saying, “I am Joseph!”

But still, he was not sure that this was

true, nor that his brothers were really grown as good as they seemed; and he thought he would try them a little longer before he told them who he was.

And he answered, after a little while, that their story *might* be true, certainly, but he would not believe it, until they brought this little Benjamin that they talked of, to show him.

And the men said, they were afraid they could not; for their father would never consent to part with him.

Then Joseph said, he would not let them go home, for now he was sure they were spies. And he put them in prison.

After three days, Joseph said he would let them all go home, to try to fetch Benjamin for him to see, except Simeon; and Simeon should stay in prison as a hostage for their

return; that is, Simeon was to become Joseph's slave after a certain fixed number of days were past, if they had not come back with Benjamin before that time.

So Simeon stayed in prison; and Joseph sent the others home with a little corn. In order to find out whether they were honest, he ordered his steward to put the money each had paid for the corn, back into the sacks with the corn. They never found it out till they got home; and then they were so frightened! But it was too far off to go and return it, so they gave it all back to their father to take care of. And when old Jacob heard how the great ruler of Egypt had desired to see Benjamin, and how he had kept Simeon as hostage, he was very sad; and he would not agree to let Benjamin go.

But, after a while, all the corn they had brought from Egypt with them was used up ; and they began to starve again.

Then Jacob saw that they must go to fetch more ; and he gave them double the money that they had brought back in their sacks, without knowing of it, to pay the ruler of Egypt honestly ; and, with many tears, and many commands to his sons, to be sure and take great care of Benjamin, Jacob let him go.

And Reuben and Judah, two of the sons, (the same who had tried to prevent their hurting little Joseph in the field) told their old father, they would die themselves, sooner than any harm should come to the boy ; and then they all travelled away on their camels, and left Jacob weeping at home.



When Joseph saw his dear little brother Benjamin, he was so pleased and overjoyed, that he began to weep, and he turned away his face, lest his brothers should see his tears, and guess who he was.

And they thought he was angry, and they tried to please him, by making low bows, and telling him, this was the boy they had spoken of.

And Joseph turned round again, and said, it was all right now ; he saw that their story of themselves was true, and now they might buy as much corn as they chose.

And he let Simeon out of prison, and asked them all to dine with him.

When he helped them to meat, he helped the eldest first, and then the next oldest, and so on ; and they all wondered how he could

possibly have found out how old they each were: but still they never guessed that he was Joseph their brother.

After the feast with Joseph, they brought their money for the corn; and again Joseph secretly ordered his steward to put their money back into each sack; and to put his own silver cup that he had lent Benjamin to drink out of, in Benjamin's sack.

Then, when they were gone some way, Joseph sent after them, and pretended to think they were thieves; and said they had stolen his cup.

The men declared they knew nothing about it; and asked if it was likely that they should steal a cup, when they had brought back double the price of the corn, to make up for not having paid properly before?

But the steward insisted on looking into their sacks ; and they offered to let the one, in whose sack it should be found, go back and be Joseph's slave.

And when the steward came to search Benjamin's sack,—there was the money ! and there was the silver cup !

The brothers could not imagine how it got there ; but the steward said, Benjamin must go back, and be his master's slave, now that he was found to be the one who had taken the cup.

Then Judah said, he dared not go home, without Benjamin ; and they all went back, to beg and intreat of the great ruler, that he would let Benjamin go home.

Judah offered to stay, and be slave, instead of him ; and they all begged so earnestly,

that now Joseph was quite sure that they were honest men, and what was more, that they were obedient to his father, and loved each other and Benjamin.

Joseph could keep his secret no longer : he sent all his Egyptian servants out of the room, and when he and his brothers were left alone together, he burst into tears, and said, "I am Joseph!" and he kissed his brothers all, and wept aloud.

Little Benjamin wept too. But the rest of his brothers were half frightened.

For they remembered how ill they had treated Joseph, and they were afraid that, now he was so great a man, he would be angry with them, and punish them.

But Joseph spoke kindly to them; and told them he had forgotten and forgiven

all their cruelty to him ; and he was glad, now, that it had happened, because now he was able to help them all.

And he went and asked leave of Pharoah the King, to give them some land to build houses upon in Egypt.

And Pharoah was glad to do anything to help Joseph, and his family ; because Joseph had been so useful to him. And Pharoah sent waggons, and horses and camels, to fetch Jacob and his sons' wives, and their children, and all their goods.

And Joseph said, "Farewell," to his brothers, and sent them away.

When they told Jacob, he could not believe it was really true.

He shook his head, and said, "Oh, no ! it could not be that Joseph was alive ! he had

died a long time ago !” But his sons showed him the waggons that were standing waiting for his household goods.

And at last he believed what they told, him, and his heart was glad ; and he got into the waggon, with his sons, and his grandchildren, and they all travelled away into Egypt. And Pharoah gave them the land of Goshen to live in.

So Jacob saw his son Joseph once more before he died ; and they were all happy together.

Joseph was Ruler of Egypt as long as he lived ; and he begged his brothers, if ever they went back to Canaan, to take his bones and bury them there, that they might be near where Abraham and Isaac had died and were buried.

His father Jacob had been taken there to be buried too.

For Joseph had not forgotten the Word of the LORD, that Isaac's children should one day have Canaan for their own.

#### MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES.

AFTER Joseph had been dead a long time, the old King Pharoah who had known him and had been kind to his family, was dead too ; and another King Pharoah began to reign.

Joseph's eleven brothers all lived still in Goshen. They each had a great number of children and grandchildren, and each family lived in one place, and was called by the name of the son of Jacob, to whom they belonged. Jacob had another name, ISRAEL, and the Egyptians often called all the fami-

lies of all his sons *Israelites*, or, the children of Israel.

So the children of Israel were divided into families, which were called by the names of the eleven brothers of Joseph.

Joseph had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh; and they too lived in Goshen, and they too, had families called by their names.

The Israelites were very useful servants to the new King Pharoah.

But they came by degrees to be so many, there were so many children born and grown up in Goshen, that the King began to think there would soon be more Israelites than Egyptians.

And he was determined to stop this; for he feared they would conquer the Egyptians, and rule over the land. And he gave out a cruel order.



He ordered every little boy to be killed that should be born, in the land of Goshen, belonging to the Israelites. And there was sad work in Goshen.

The mothers and fathers of the little boys wept sadly ; but the King would have it so.

There was once a little boy born, whose mother was determined to save him if she could. And she hid him three months, and nobody found out that she had a little boy.

At last he grew so big a baby, that she could not hide him any longer ; and then she invented a clever way of trying to save him.

She wove a pretty basket of rushes, and laid the sleeping boy in it ; covered him up, and put the basket among the tall bulrushes, that grew in the river Nile, which runs through Egypt.

The basket was covered with pitch, to prevent the water from wetting him.

Then the mother set her little girl, whose name was Miriam, to watch the basket. So Miriam hid herself in the bushes.

Presently the King's daughter came down to the river side, with all her maidens, to bathe.

Egypt is a very hot country.

There is very little water in it, besides the river Nile; and in those days, instead of washing as we do, in their houses, all the people, ladies and all, went down almost every day, to bathe in the cool river.

The Princess happened to come near the place where the basket lay.

And she saw something lying among the reeds, and she could not think what odd-shaped thing it was.

She sent one of her maidens to fetch it.

And when it was brought, and opened, there was a little baby boy ! asleep ! but the shaking of the basket woke him, and he opened his little eyes, and smiled on the Princess.

Perhaps she smiled at him too ; but she soon felt sad, for the baby began to cry, and she guessed directly that this must be an Israelite boy ; who had perhaps been hidden by his mother to prevent his being killed by her cruel father.

And she consulted with her maidens what they should do with the pretty baby.

They agreed to take care of him ; and just then they saw Miriam, who had crept out of the bushes to hear what the lady said.

They saw by the shape and colour of her

face and dress, that she was a little Israelite girl; and they told her to go and fetch a nurse for the little boy, from her own people.

Whom do you think Miriam fetched? She fetched her own Mother! and happy indeed was her Mother, to find that she had succeeded in saving her darling boy.

The Princess called the boy Moses, because she had taken him out of the water. "Moses," means "taken out."

And they all went home. And the Princess paid the mother of the little baby for nursing him, till he was a great boy. She did not know it was his own mother. And when Moses was a great boy, the Princess called him her son, and took care of him.

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MOSES grew to be a man; and still he lived in the King's palace, with the kind Princess.

But he could not forget that he belonged to the chosen people of GOD; and when he saw the Egyptians around him worshipping wood and stone, and birds, and cows, and cats, and crocodiles, he never knelt down with them to pray.

He knew that the Egyptians prayed to some of these creatures, because they were useful to them; and to others they offered all sorts of presents, because they were afraid of them.

The crocodiles that swam in the Nile were fierce creatures, and the Egyptians made presents to them, thinking to please them, and prevent their doing any mischief.

But Moses knew that there was a God greater than any of these beasts, and birds, and reptiles. ONE, who had made them all; and had made the Egyptians themselves. ONE, who loved all those who tried to be good, and to obey His commands; and who, when He sent evil upon His people, only did it to warn them to leave off doing wrong, and to make them afraid of doing so again.

And Moses could not call any one else "GOD."

And Moses and the Israelites felt, that Abel had not offered his lamb because he was *afraid* of GOD. He had not given it to his GOD to turn away his anger, but he gave it to One whom he loved most; he gave it to One to whom he owed most, and he gave it gladly.

So Moses could not kneel down and pray to the fierce creatures and idols that the Egyptians fancied were always angry, unless they made offerings to them.

The King Pharoah was still very cruel to the Israelites. He found, that though he tried to kill all the little boys, there were still a great many Israelite men ; and he made them work very hard, and let his servants beat them, and treat them very badly.

One day, Moses happened to see an Egyptian beating an Israelite very unkindly, and he struck the Egyptian down ; and the Egyptian died from the blow. Moses thought no one saw it happen ; but an Israelite accused him of it next day.

Then Moses was afraid : he thought King Pharoah would hear of it and kill him too ;

and he fled away into the sandy deserts, where Pharoah could not find him.

There he fell in with some wandering Ishmaelites, and he became servant to their King Jethro; and tended his sheep.

One day he was sitting thinking about his poor brethren in Egypt, when he suddenly saw a bush near him flame up, as if it were on fire, and yet the leaves were not burnt.

He went to see what made it seem to be on fire.

And he heard a voice calling, "Moses!" And he said, "Here am I." And the voice said, "Take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. I am the GOD of thy Fathers; the GOD of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob."

And Moses felt afraid at the solemn words



that the voice had said. And he covered his face with his hands.

And the voice told him, that God had chosen him to save the Israelites from the hands of the cruel King Pharoah.

For God had seen the ill-treatment of His chosen people.

And Moses feared. And he said, he did not know how he should make his brethren believe that he had seen the wonderful bush, and heard the voice of the Angel of God.

And the voice bade him throw the stick that he held in his hand, on to the ground. And the stick turned into a snake, and Moses ran away from it.

Then the voice bade him take hold of it again. And when he took hold of it, it became a stick again as before.

And many other wonderful things happened.

Then Moses felt sure that the LORD his God would be with him, and help him to bring his brethren safe out of Egypt; and he set off to fetch them.

But the cruel King Pharoah did not want to part with the Israelites. They were very useful slaves to him.

They did hard work which the Egyptians did not like to do themselves.

So Moses tried to persuade him in vain.

Then Moses tried what fear would do, and he frightened the King and his people with dreadful plagues, which his God gave him power to bring on the land.

Once it was quite dark all over Egypt at noonday. None of the Egyptians could see at all.

But it was light, as usual, in the houses of the Israelites.

As long as King Pharoah was frightened, he promised to let the Children of Israel go ; but no sooner did Moses stop the dreadful plagues, than he declared again that they should not go. At last, Moses grew tired of trying to persuade the King by speaking to him, and he said he would not come and ask him any more.

That night, he told all the Israelites, by the command of God, to kill a lamb, and sprinkle the blood upon their doorposts.

Then they were to pack up all their goods, and get ready to travel away.

In the morning, when the Egyptians woke, they all began to cry with grief.

In every house, that had not the blood of

the lamb sprinkled on its doorposts, in token of obedience to the ONE true GOD, there was somebody dead!

For the Angel of GOD passed over the land in the night-time, and destroyed the first-born in all the houses of the Egyptians.

But not one Israelite was dead.

Nobody was hurt, that had done as Moses bade.

Then the Israelites were rejoiced at the safety of all their friends; and Moses told them to remember that awful night when they got into their own promised land.

But the Egyptians were terribly frightened and sad; for they had all a son, or brother, or friend, to mourn over.

And the King and his people sent the Children of Israel away in a great hurry, for

now they were really afraid of the great God, who had done such wonderful and terrible things for His chosen people.

## THE EXODUS.

THE moment Moses got leave for the Israelites to go into the desert, he ordered them all to set off.

They had all packed up their goods, the night before, as he had told them to do ; so they were soon ready, and away they went.

But when they were quite gone, really gone, the King forgot how frightened he had been ; and he wanted his useful slaves back again.

He did not care for his promise given, that they should go safely ; and he set off to overtake them, and bring them back. He took a

great army of men with him ; some on horses, some in a kind of carriage, in which they stood up to drive, called a chariot, and some on foot.

He got in sight of the Israelites just as they came near to a Sea, called the Red Sea ; and now it was the turn of the Israelites to be frightened. They all came to Moses, and cried out that they should certainly be either killed by the Egyptians, or drowned in the Sea.

Moses reminded them, that the LORD was on their side ; that if they would only trust, all would yet be right.

When the Egyptians came very near the camp of the Israelites, Moses stretched out his hand, with the wonderful rod in it ; then, a strong east-wind blew up the waters of the

sea, till they stood up like a high wall on each side ; and between them, the Israelites saw the bed of the sea quite dry.

Then they went across this strange path, as fast as they could ; and thus, though they walked between the waters of the sea, they were not wetted at all.

No sooner did the army of Pharaoh see this, than they hastened after them.

But, when the last of the Israelites had set his foot on the dry land, on the other side of the sea, Moses stretched out his rod again ; and the wall of waters broke down, and the billows poured into their old place.

The Egyptians could not turn back quickly enough ; the waters rushed in upon them, and covered them ; chariots, horses, riders, and footmen ; and they were all drowned ; and

not one escaped, to go back to Egypt to tell the sad tale.

But Moses, and his brother Aaron, and his sister Miriam, and all the Israelites, stood dry and safe on the land, and saw what happened to the cruel King and his army.

And they praised the LORD their God for His mercy to themselves; and they made songs about it; and the men and women danced and sang for joy.

When you are old enough to read the real Book that all these stories are taken from, you will read there the words of Miriam's song of praise.

### THE DESERT.

THE Israelites were now quite safe from the Egyptians.



But they were not, even now, quite so firm in their trust in their GOD as they should have been.

And GOD told Moses that He would not allow them to go into the Land which He had promised to their fathers, until they proved to Him by their conduct, that they were good and obedient ; and fit to be His chosen people, to keep the remembrance of Him upon the earth.

So Moses led the Israelites about the sandy desert. Sometimes there was no water to be had. Then the people began to murmur. But Moses struck a rock with his wonderful rod, and water flowed out of it directly, and the men and women and children ran and drank of it.

Then there was nothing to eat. And

again the people forgot Who could, and would, help them. And they accused Moses of having brought them into that wild desolate place to die; and said, they wanted to go back to Egypt; where, if they worked hard, they had, at least, plenty to eat and drink.

But Moses spoke sternly to them, and said, that when they murmured against him, they murmured against the LORD, for he had done nothing but what the LORD their God had commanded him.

And he bade them wait till the evening, and then they should see, that the LORD who had brought them safely out of Egypt, could also feed them in the desert, where no man before had ever found food.

In the evening, a great quantity of quails, birds which are very good to eat, flew over

the Camp, and settled, so that the people could catch them. Next morning there was something white, and hard, and round, lying on the ground. It tasted sweet and good; and the people gathered it up and ate it. They did not know what it was, and they said, one to another, "What is it?" The word in their language for "What is it," was "Manna;" so the strange white sweet thing of which nobody knew the name, was called "Manna." From that day forward, the manna was always found, every morning except Saturdays.

Saturday was the seventh day of the week; and the Israelites rested on that day; because the LORD their God commanded that they should not do any work on the seventh day.

“ For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day ; wherefore the LORD blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.” That is, made it holy, and not like the other days of the week.

So the Israelites called it the “ Rest-day ;” or, in their language, “ Sabbath.”

At length the Israelites were led by Moses close to the mountain, where, when he was a boy, tending sheep, he had seen the Burning Bush.

The Mountain was called Horeb ; and one of its highest parts was called Sinai.

Here GOD bade Moses stop ; and tell the people to wash themselves, and their clothes, and get ready for the third day. And on the third day the people stood waiting to see what was to come.

And a cloud rested on the top of Mount Sinai. And a voice called Moses. And he went up into the thick darkness. Presently he came a little way down again, and told the people to stand still, and not to come near the mountain, lest they should die.

Then there were thunderings and lightnings, from out of the cloud ; and the voice of the Angel of God gave out ten laws, or rules, which the Israelites were to obey. These ten laws are called the Ten Commandments.

And the people were afraid.

But Moses said, "Fear not." And when the voice ceased, Moses drew near to the thick darkness, and listened to many other rules which God gave him ; but none were so great and important as these Ten.

And he repeated them over to the people, and they promised to try to keep them all.

Moses went up into Mount Sinai again, with a young man named Joshua, to hear all the other laws which GOD had to give him ; leaving his brother Aaron to take care of the people.

And he stayed there forty days.

The people waited at the bottom of the mountain. And in a few weeks they got tired of waiting. And they went to Aaron, the brother of Moses, and said, it was of no use waiting any longer for that Moses ; he could not possibly be alive now ; for there was nothing to eat, up there in the Mount, where he had gone.

And they wanted an image made of one of the Egyptian Gods, that they might

always carry it about with them, and not have to wait.

Aaron was as thoughtless and foolish as the people.

Though they had all been so very lately fed, themselves, in the wild desert; though they had, only a few weeks before, seen the fearful light and darkness on the mountain, and heard the voice, which had warned them not to have any other Gods, besides the one true GOD, who could not be seen; though the voice had told them never to make any image, or likeness of anything in Earth or Heaven, to worship, as the other nations did; they still dared to forget that the GOD who had helped them, when they were good and obedient, could, and would, punish them if they did wrong.

And Aaron made a piece of gold, into the shape of a calf.

And the foolish, wicked people danced round it, and sang, and brought it presents, and prayed to it, just as they had seen the Egyptians do.

While they were busy doing so wrong, Moses came down with Joshua, from the Mountain, to finish telling them about the laws. He had got in his hands two great pieces of stone, on which he had cut the words of the Ten Commandments.

He was so shocked to see what they had done, that he dropped the two flat pieces of stone (which were called tables), that he was carrying; and they broke in their fall.

He went down, and called to all those who remembered the true GOD, and wished to be



good, to stand apart from the others. And the family of Levi (the son of Jacob), to which Moses and Aaron themselves belonged, came away ; and GOD commanded Moses to send them to kill the wicked men, who still stayed by the calf.

So they went and did so.

Then the rest were terribly afraid, and they begged Moses to pray to GOD to forgive them. And Moses prayed.

But GOD told Moses, that though He would forgive them now, and not cause any more to be killed at this time, He should not allow such thoughtless people to go into the Promised Land : they should die in the wilderness ; but their children should go in, if they were careful to do right.

Even Aaron was to die without seeing the

land, because he had yielded to the people, and made the golden calf.

And Moses went up again into the Mountain, and stayed yet another forty days. And when he came down again, he had got two fresh tables of stone with the Ten Commandments written upon them.

His face shone so brightly, that the people could scarcely bear to look at it. Then he covered it with a veil.

And he told the people that they must bring him all the ornaments, and gold and silver things they had, and plenty of cloth of beautiful colours, that he might make a great tent to cover the tables of stone.

The families of Jacob's sons were grown so large, now, there were so many grown-up men belonging to each, who had got children, that they were called Tribes.

Moses chose the Tribe of Levi, to take care of the beautiful tent or Tabernacle, and the Tables of Stone that were in it.

They were to carry it when they marched; and to see that nobody injured it, when it was standing.

Then Moses had to choose out of the Tribe of Levi one family to be Priests; that is, the men who were to kill the lambs, and bulls, and other offerings to God which the people brought. And they were to help the people to remember to keep all the Laws which God had given them through Moses.

God commanded Moses to choose the family of Aaron, his brother, for this office. And they were dressed differently from the rest of the people, that they might be known for Priests.

When all this was settled, they journeyed on, away from Sinai.

### THE PROMISED LAND.

ONCE, and only once, when they were in great trouble for want of water, Moses forgot that all his power came from GOD; and he spoke before the people, as if he could do the wonderful things himself, and he did not say it was GOD who helped him to bring the water a second time from the dry rock for them.

And now, he was told by GOD that he was not to go into the beautiful land.

He had seen and known too much of the power of GOD, and his own helplessness, to be allowed to go unpunished, for pride, and want of humble reliance on GOD ALONE, for help in trouble.

When they got within sight of the Land, Moses appointed twelve men, one from each family, or tribe, to go and see which was the best road into Canaan.

And they came back, and said, that it was a beautiful land.

There were quantities of corn-fields, and high hills, on whose sunny sides vines grew, with great bunches of fine purple grapes growing upon them ; and there were meadows and plains below, for cows and sheep and asses and camels to graze in ; and palm-trees that bore sweet dates, to dry for food in winter ; and olive trees, that bore oil to burn in their lamps, and for many other uses ; and there was the river Jordan, flowing into the Dead Sea, near where Lot had settled, long before ; and last,—not the least

useful,—all along one side of the Land, was—the Sea.

But, said the men, it is quite impossible that we should ever be able to get this land to live in.

For there are numbers of cities with high walls and gates; and there are plenty of people living there; and these people are fierce; they are great giants; they are taller and stronger, a great deal, than we are. And they do not want us to come and live with them. We had better not try to turn them out. We shall only be beaten, and perhaps our little ones killed. Let us turn back, and go somewhere else.

But two of the twelve men stood up among the people, and cried out, that it was true, certainly, that some of the people that lived in this Land, were rather tall and fierce.

But the land was so beautiful, it was well worth trying for ; and besides, they cried, do we not know, that no one can stand against the LORD ? And we have His word of Promise, that we *shall* have this land for our own. Let us go forward, then, in His name ! Let us trust in Him, and we shall surely conquer !

The names of these two brave and faithful men, were Caleb and Joshua.

And Caleb and Joshua were the only two men that went into the beautiful land, to live in it, of all those who had come in sight of it.

For Moses led the ungrateful doubting men about, forty years more ; till all who had not trusted in God, were dead. Moses saw the Land from the top of Mount Pisgah.

But before he went up to look at it, he

called all the people together; and read over to them the Ten Commandments; and repeated all the other laws which God had given him; and he begged the people to try and remember, to do them.

Then he appointed the faithful Joshua to be their leader: and to take care that they went on right.

And after telling the people why he could not lead them in himself, he bade them "Farewell."

And he went up into Mount Pisgah, alone. No one saw his joy, when he saw, stretched beneath him, the beautiful land which he had once hoped to live in. No one saw his repentance for the pride of self, which had prevented his entrance into it. No one saw him die. And no one saw his burial-place; save God only.



And the people waited ; but finding that he did not return, they mourned for him, some days.

And then they crossed the river Jordan, and entered the Land, under the guidance of Joshua.

## JOSHUA.

JOSHUA found, as he expected, that the people who lived in Canaan were fierce and rude : and they worshipped wood and stone.

But he conquered them every time they came to fight with him. Till he came at last to a town called Jericho.

This was one of the best and largest towns in the country. It had high walls, and they were very thick, so that the Israelites could neither get over them nor knock them down.

You must remember that in those times they had no cannon-balls to knock walls down from a distance.

And the people began to despair of ever getting into this city.

But Joshua, by the command of God, ordered them to walk round and round the city; and the Priests went round with the people, and blew trumpets made of rams' horns.

And when they had been round the city walls once every day for seven days, they went round seven times in one day. Then they stood still. And the Priests blew their trumpets, and the people all shouted. And the strong walls fell! They fell flat, as if they had been knocked down. Then the army of Israel rushed into the city, and took it.

At last Joshua had got all the land, except a narrow bit, that lay between him and the sea-side. Here some very fierce people called Philistines lived.

The Israelites had now got enough land to live in at present, and they were very anxious to leave off fighting, and go and settle in the farms and towns, and pleasant places they had already taken. So Joshua allowed them to leave the Philistines alone.

And he divided the land equally among all the families or Tribes.

Judah had one piece, Benjamin another, Reuben another, and so on. Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, had, as I told you, left families called by their names; and these families were treated by Joshua, as if *their fathers* had been Jacob's sons, instead

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of grandsons ; and each had a piece of land given to them.

The tribe of Levi had no land given to them, all in one place, like the others. But they had a city or two, given them, in each division. And each tribe was to give to them a tenth part of all their corn, and wine, and oil, and cattle ; and of all the produce of their land, every year. So then the Levites would not be obliged to work for their bread ; but would be able to spend all their time in attending to the Ark of the Tables of the Law ; and in teaching and preaching to the people, about the LORD their God, whom they were to fear and worship, instead of the false Gods of the Heathens.

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THE Israelites were very busy, after Joshua died, preparing their new lands; planting trees, digging wells, and making land-marks to show where the grounds belonging to the different tribes separated. For they had no hedges, as we have. Sometimes they had stone walls, but very seldom. One great stone, placed here and there, was enough: and the people were to be severely punished, if they moved these land-marks.

In one part of this beautiful land, of which the children of Isaac had now got possession, as had been promised to his father Abraham, there was a great lake. This lake held quantities of fish, and the Tribes who settled near it, found the fish very good to eat; and they soon made boats (which they called vessels), to go fishing in. Beautiful hills

sloped down to the lake at some places. At others, woods, full of beautiful trees, such as we seldom see in this cold country, grew close to the water's edge. Those Israelites who had never seen the real great sea, thought this lake, in Galilee, so very large, that they called it a Sea: and it was called the Sea of Galilee. Many years afterwards, when the Israelites had left off living in tents, and had built towns near the Lake, it was named after the largest towns, as we shall see. This lake was one of the most valuable things Joshua found, in those parts of the land which the twelve spies had not seen.

The Israelites would have been very comfortable in this land, but for one thing. They had been so very anxious to set to work at their farms, that they had persuaded

Joshua to leave the Philistines, people who lived near one part of the sea-coast, quiet ; and not to try to conquer them, as they were known to be fierce, and it would take some time to turn them out of the land.

No sooner did the Israelites leave their arms, and begin to work in the fields, than the Philistines came down upon them ; burnt their tents, carried off their corn, and killed the labourers.

Many of the rulers, or judges, of Israel, went out against them, with armies ; but they could not conquer them all.

This was very troublesome to those tribes who lived near the country of the Philistines.

There was one man among them, who was so strong, that he could tear a lion to pieces with his hands. And he spent his life in conquering the Philistines.

Once, when he was asleep, they bound him with cords ; but he woke, and stretching his arms and legs, the strong ropes burst as if they had been half-burnt thread ; and again he was free.

Again the Philistines caught this Sampson, after he had killed a great number of them ; for he came into one of their cities, and slept there. Then they shut the city gates, and thought, surely now he was safely caught.

But, when they came to kill him, Sampson walked out into the street, took up the city gates, with their posts, bars, and all, though they were nearly as heavy as a house-wall ; and he carried them up a hill some way off, and set them down again : leaving the Philistines far behind.

But at last he confessed, that his strength



would be gone, if his hair should be cut off; and they got it cut when he was asleep; for nobody dared to touch him, when he was awake.

Then Sampson was really made prisoner. For he had broken his vow to his God, that he would never tell where his strength lay, which had been given him to defend Israel.

And the cruel Philistines bound him, and put out his eyes!

One day, his enemies made him come into a great house where they all sate, while they made sport of him.

As they had blinded him, they thought he could do them no more mischief.

But Sampson pretended to be tired, and he leant against the pillars which supported the roof of the house.

This house was so large, that there were three thousand Philistines in it then.

Sampson took hold of the two pillars, one with each arm, and praying earnestly to God, to strengthen him this once, he broke them in two.

Down came the roof; down fell the walls, crushing and killing everybody beneath.

When the Israelites went to see what had happened to their enemies, they found Sampson dead too.

#### SAMUEL.

I TOLD you that Moses had chosen one of the families of Israel to take care of the Ark of the Law, or, the Chest, which held the Tables of Stone; and of the Tabernacle, or Tent, which covered it.

When the other Tribes came every year to offer their first lambs and first-fruits on the altar of their God, in token of thankfulness, the Levites were appointed to take the offerings, and the Sons of Aaron, the Priests, were to kill and burn them.

The people had been ordered by Moses, to kill a lamb every year, at the time of the year when their fathers had escaped from Egypt; and they were to give some of the flesh to the Priests, and the rest they were to eat, at home, ready dressed for a journey; in remembrance of the night before the flight from Egypt. Then it was the duty of the Levites to kill these lambs for the people.

They used always to bring their lambs to the place where the Ark of the Law rested, for the Levites to kill.

And they feasted there together happily, in remembrance of all the wonderful deeds that had been done, to deliver them from slavery in Egypt.

They called this feast, the Passover ; because, the Angel of God, who had killed all the first-born in each house in Egypt, had *passed over* the houses of those who had sprinkled on their doorposts the blood of the Lamb, in token of obedience to God.

Among the Priests who were alive at the time of Sampson, there was one named Eli. With him there lived a little boy, called Samuel, who was to be a Priest when he was old enough.

Eli's own sons were Priests, but they were not good men, and they did not do as Priests ought to have done. Eli was very

old, and blind; and he could not see what wrong things his sons did. Little Samuel often longed to tell him, but did not like to grieve him. One night Eli was sleeping in one room, and Samuel in another, near the old man, ready to do any thing for him that he might want.

In the night Samuel heard a voice calling him by name; and he jumped up and ran to know what Eli wanted.

But Eli said that he had not spoken. So Samuel went back to bed.

Presently, he heard again, some one calling "Samuel!" And again he ran to Eli. But Eli said, "I called thee not, my child." And Eli thought it might be the voice of the LORD. And he bade Samuel, if he heard it again, to answer to the LORD, and not to himself.

Again Samuel went back to his little bed. Most likely his little bed was a carpet, or mat, laid on the floor of the house. For that country is too hot for people to have curtains, and beds, and blankets, like ours.

Again the third time, the little boy was wakened by the voice. And he answered, "Speak, LORD, for thy servant heareth."

Then the LORD told him all that would happen to Eli's household. How the two wicked sons should not be Priests; for they were not fit to take care of the Tables of the Laws, which they did not obey: and how they should die before their father; and how all that belonged to Eli should die; and how Samuel should be Priest and Prophet in Eli's place.

Prophets were men who could tell beforehand what was going to happen.

Moses was a Prophet in some things. We shall read of many more presently.

Samuel did not like to go and tell Eli the terrible things he had heard ; so he lay quite still till the morning.

Then Eli asked if he had been called again. And Eli asked so many questions, that Samuel was obliged to tell him all.

And Eli was grieved for the wickedness of his sons, and for the punishment that awaited them ; but he bowed his head, and said, "It is the LORD : let Him do as seemeth Him good."

And all happened, as had been told to Samuel.

And the people of Israel heard that the LORD had revealed things to Samuel. And they often sent to ask advice of him, when in trouble.

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THE tribes who lived near the Philistines came oftenest to Samuel, to ask him to help them.

And Samuel often told the Judges and Rulers to collect the other tribes, and go to fight the Philistines. But the other tribes cared very little about what happened, so far away from their own farms, and they would not always come to help their brethren.

At last the Philistines came into the country of the Israelites so far, that they were frightened; and they sent to the place called Shiloh, where the Ark of the Law rested, to fetch it, for they said they had always conquered when they had carried it about with them before.

When it came into the camp, carried by its Priests, the army of Israel shouted for



joy. The Philistines heard the shout; and they knew what it meant. And they were afraid.

For they had heard of the dreadful things that had happened to the Egyptians; and to the other people that once lived in Canaan; and they fancied, that in this Ark there must be some great idol, or image, which was a more powerful God than their own Idol, Dagon.

They did not know, or they had forgotten, that the real true God whom the Israelites worshipped, could not be imitated in wood and stone; that He could not be seen, though He saw and over-ruled everything that happened by night or day.

So they determined to get this wonderful Ark away from the Israelites, and then, they thought they should be able to conquer them.

And they fought against the Israelites, and conquered ; and got the Ark, and carried it off. They put it, for the night, into the great house that they had built for their idol, Dagon.

Meantime, the Israelites were mourning and weeping over the loss of the Ark of their Laws. And they went to ask Samuel why this sad thing had been allowed to happen. Samuel told them, that it was, because they had begun, themselves, to worship wood and stone ; and that if they wished the LORD to help them, they must first show that they were His servants, by doing His will.

When the Priests of Dagon went next morning to look at the Ark, perhaps to see what shaped idol there was inside, they found their own idol fallen on the ground. They

set it up again, and went away. And again the next day, there was Dagon, fallen again, and broken all to pieces. Then the Priests were afraid; and the Philistine people set the Ark in a cart, and fastened two cows to it, and drove them towards the country of the Israelites; and left them to go their own way: for they were afraid to keep the strange Ark any longer.

The cows went into a field belonging to an Israelite; and he and his men were delighted to see the Ark of their Law back again: and they killed the cows, and offered them there, where they had stopped, to show their thankfulness to God.

Samuel warned the people, that if they wanted to keep the Ark safe, they must keep the Laws, by their own conduct; and then

their GOD would be with them. Then the people left off worshipping idols ; and burnt their images of wood and stone. And the next time they went out to fight against the Philistines, they conquered them.

But the people went to Samuel, and complained, that the Judges whom they had, did not manage to keep the armies together. As soon as one battle was fought and gained, away went the men, each to his own distant farm ; and the neighbours of the fierce Philistines were left as unprotected as before. And they begged Samuel to make them a King, who should have power to force the people to stay and finish conquering the Philistines at once.

Samuel consented ; and he chose a man named Saul, who was tall and strong, to be King.

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SOME of the children of Israel often married people belonging to the neighbouring countries.

Samuel did not like this ; because these people worshipped idols, and the Israelites were often led away by them, to do so, too ; but he could not prevent it.

Once a woman, called Naomi, went with her husband to live in a strange land, because corn was scarce in Canaan. She had two sons, and they married women that lived near them.

After a while, Naomi's husband, and her two sons, all died ; and she was left alone and desolate.

She determined to go back, to live among her own people of Israel again ; and she told the widows of her sons, that she did not want to part them from their friends.

They might stay in their own land, and she would go back, alone, to her's.

One of them determined to stay ; but the other, whose name was Ruth, could not bear to think of her poor desolate old mother-in-law going home all alone.

She wept, and said, she could not part from her. Naomi had always been a mother to her, and she would always be a daughter to Naomi. But Naomi said, she was going to her own land, where people did not worship idols, as Ruth's kindred did.

And she begged Ruth to stay, and let her go alone. But Ruth said, " Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee. For where thou goest, I will go ; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy GOD, my GOD."

Then Naomi loved Ruth even more than before ; and she was very glad to have so kind a daughter, to go home with her.

And they went home, to where Naomi lived with her husband, before the famine had driven them away. Here Ruth went into a field to glean, for it was harvest-time. It happened that the field belonged to a kinsman of Naomi ; and when he found out who Ruth was, and how good she had been to her mother-in-law, he gave them both plenty to eat ; and after a while, this man, whose name was Boaz, married Ruth.

Ruth had a son, named Obed ; and Obed had a son, in due time, called Jesse.

Jesse had eight sons. Some of these sons were tall and handsome ; but they were not good.

And the LORD bade Samuel, the Prophet, go to the house of Jesse, and choose a King from among his sons. For Saul, the first King, had disobeyed Samuel's commands, given him in the name of the LORD. Saul knew that he had done wrong; and to make up for it, he killed a number of sheep and lambs, and burned them for offerings to the LORD. But Samuel went to Saul, and asked him, whether he did not know that the LORD his God delighted not in sacrifices, when they were not given with the heart. "For," said Samuel, sternly, "to obey, is better than sacrifice, and to listen, than the fat of rams."

Saul was sorry, now, for he felt that what Samuel said, was true. But Samuel told him, he should not be King over Israel long; a disobedient servant of the LORD



could not rule over His people. And Samuel went away from Saul; and he entered the cottage of Jesse, the Shepherd.

Samuel asked to see his sons; and Jesse fetched them all, one by one, except the youngest, who was out, feeding sheep. Samuel asked to see him also. And when the boy David came in, he looked handsome, and what was better, he looked kind and good.

Samuel anointed him to be King. That is, he poured a little oil on his head, and said, he should be King, after Saul.

After Saul's disgrace, he became sad and melancholy, and sometimes was angry with everybody and everything around him. And at such times he liked best to hear music. David played very well on the harp; and he went to live with King Saul for a time, to play to him when he felt ill.

And Saul loved David very much for some time.

### DAVID AND GOLIATH.

SAUL spent nearly all his time fighting against the Philistines; and as David was very young, he went back to his father, to tend his sheep, when Saul went out to battle. But David's brothers went with Saul, for they were old enough to go to war.

One day, Jesse sent David with some corn for his brothers, to the camp.

When David came to the army, he saw a great tall man, taller and larger than anybody he had ever seen before, stalking up and down before the tents of the Israelites, and calling for some of them to come and fight with him. David's brothers told him

that this man was a Philistine giant, who came every day to see if any of the Israelites dared fight with him. And he was such a great strong giant that nobody dared.

David thought it was a great shame, to the army, that not one man of all those who fought in the name of the LORD, should dare to fight the idolater. And he said, "I dare!"

But all the soldiers, and his own brothers, laughed at the idea of the young lad fighting with the great giant.

Some one went and told Saul; and the King sent for David, to know if it was true.

And David said, that once, when he was alone, feeding his father's sheep, a lion and a bear came to kill and eat the sheep; but he had killed them both. "And the LORD," said he, "who delivered me out of the mouth

of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, shall aid me to slay even this Philistine."

And Saul said he might try ; and he gave David some of his own armour. But Saul's armour was large enough for a grown man, as he was ; and it was very heavy ; and the boy David said, he would rather not wear the armour ; it hindered his movements, for he was not used to it.

But he went to a brook that ran near ; and he picked up some smooth stones out of it, and put them into his shepherd's bag that he had with him ; then he took a long narrow loop of leather called a sling, and hung it over his shoulder.

The next time Goliath, for that was the name of the giant, came to defy Israel, David went to meet him, and said, " I will fight with you."

And the giant looked down to the ground, and round and about, and pretended that David was so very little, he could not see him.

But David said that he might be small, but the LORD was on his side.

And the Philistine scorned him, and came near, thinking to kill David very easily.

But as he came near, David put a stone into his sling, and running towards the giant, swung it round ; and the smooth stone flew out of the sling very fast, and hit Goliath very hard on his forehead ; so hard, that it went into his head. And the giant fell down, quite dead. Then David drew the giant's own sword, and cut off his head, and carried it off to show Saul.

Then the Israelites took courage and went

after the frightened Philistines, and conquered them.

When David came back, Saul was delighted with his brave little servant. And Saul's son Jonathan loved David dearly. David loved Jonathan very much, too; for Jonathan was kind, and gentle, and good.

The army loved David, because he was brave. And they made songs about his fight with the giant; and sang them, wherever they went. Saul heard one of these songs, which said that Saul had done great things, but David had done greater! Then Saul was jealous.

He remembered what Samuel had said, that he should not be King of Israel long; and he thought that the army, and the people, and even Jonathan, loved David more

than they loved him. He forgot that they did so, because David was good-natured, and kind to all, while Saul was often cross and unkind; and he only thought how he could best get rid of David, lest the people should make him King soon.

Jonathan found out that his father intended mischief to David; and he warned David to get out of the way. Saul had promised, that whoever should kill Goliath, should have his daughter Michal for a wife. But, when David came to ask for her, Saul made excuses, and said he was too young. But David was determined to have her, for he loved her very much.

At last Saul said, he would let Michal be David's wife, if he would kill two hundred Philistines; thinking, that if David tried, he

would be sure to get killed himself, and there would be an end to his being King.

But David went with some brave men to help him, and killed the two hundred enemies, and came and told Saul, and said that now he was come for Michal. Then Saul was vexed, but he was obliged to yield. So David and Michal were married, and Jonathan was glad.

Saul often tried to kill David ; and every time Jonathan or Michal saved him ; till at last David fled away.

From that time, Saul was his enemy ; and went after him with armies. But he never could catch David. The army and the people loved David so much more than Saul, that there was always some one ready to give him notice of Saul's approach, so that he could go into a safer place.



Once or twice David might have killed Saul; but he never would; because he said, that though Saul was not a good man now, he had once been chosen by Samuel, the man of God (or prophet), to be King, and he would not touch his life.

David was sorry to be obliged to stay away from Saul; because it also parted him from his dear friend Jonathan.

One day Saul fought against the Philistines, and one of the men who had been fighting with him, came and told David that Saul was killed in the battle. David was sorry to hear it; but he sent directly to know where Jonathan was. They sought for him every where; and at last he was found lying where the battle had been, dead, too.

Then David was much grieved indeed ; and he sat and wept many days for his friend.

But the people were glad, for they wanted to have the brave David for their King.

#### DAVID, KING.

SOME of the men who were in Saul's army when he was killed, set up one of Saul's sons, who remained alive, and made him their King. They called him King of Israel, as Saul had been called ; and they called David King of Judah ; because all the men of the tribe of Judah were faithful to him. But one of David's people soon put an end to this, by killing the pretended King.

Then David was ruler over all Israel. And he determined not to live in tents

always, as Saul had done ; but to settle in a town, and have a real good house, and courts where the people might come and ask his advice, and tell him their troubles.

And he fixed on a town called Jerusalem. It stood on several hills, and looked over the country.

It was nearly in the middle of the land belonging to Judah, the tribe which had always been friendly to him ; partly, perhaps, because Bethlehem, the little village where David was born, and lived with his father Jesse, was one of their villages. So that David belonged to the tribe of Judah.

David had never forgotten how to play on the harp. But often when he was hiding from Saul in caves and dismal places, and in great trouble and fear, he would sit and play

on his harp, and make sad songs about his troubles, and about the help that the LORD his God had always given him : and his soldiers loved to stand by and listen.

When David came to be King, and had conquered the Philistines quite, so that they never troubled Israel any more, and when he was happy, and his people were happy, he loved to play and sing joyful songs ; and he used to take his harp up on to the roof of his house in Jerusalem, in an evening, and sit and sing there.

The house that David lived in, was built on one of the hills of Jerusalem, called Mount Zion. It was like the houses in that country now. It was only one story high ; and had a court inside, with a fountain of cool water spouting up in the middle. The country

was so hot, where David lived, that he seldom wanted to shut himself up in a room with a fire, as we often do here, even in the summer, to keep ourselves warm.

But he went into the house to sleep, only. In the day time he sat outside the house, or in the court within ; and when the sun was hot, he had a cloth drawn over the yard, or court, and fastened to the four corners of the walls of the house, so as to keep it cool and shady.

The cloth was sometimes green, or blue, or white ; and looked very pretty. Some of the houses in Jerusalem had palm-trees, and sweet-smelling shrubs planted beside the fountains in the yard ; and it was a pleasant place to sit in.

Then the roofs of the houses were flat ;

and they, too, had cloths fastened to poles, to make something like tents at the top; and from the top of David's house, on the Mount Zion at Jerusalem, he could see over the country; and a pleasant land it was to see.

There David sat, in the cool evenings; and there he sang to his harp the beautiful songs we call The Psalms.

The people loved to hear them; and learned the words, and remembered them. But the music was forgotten, so we do not know quite, how they were sung, so long ago.

David had removed the Ark of the LORD into Jerusalem to be safe; and as he sat on his roof and looked at the country, he felt sad to think there were no churches in it.

There were plenty of towns and pretty villages, and scattered houses; but there

were no church-towers, nor spires, such as we see here, wherever many houses are gathered together.

The heathen nations that lived round Israel, had plenty of Churches, which they called Temples. And David longed to build one for the Ark of the Law.

Moses had ordered, that there should be only one Temple in the land of Canaan. For the heathen nations had many temples, because they had many images, and many gods; and Moses wanted to make the people of Israel remember, that their GOD was ONE, and his NAME ONE; and that they had no need to have many temples to put images in to pray to. For their God knew even the thoughts of their hearts before they were spoken; and was ready, everywhere, and at

all times, to hear and assist those that trusted in Him, and feared His name.

But as the people had to bring their offerings to the Levites to kill and burn, David longed to have a beautiful building, where all the solemn ceremonies which Moses had ordered, should be performed all together.

And David got a great many things together, to begin to build this house, at Jerusalem. But the LORD sent him word, that because he had shed much blood, that is, had caused the death of many people, in terrible wars, and had not been a peaceful man all his life, the LORD had not chosen him to build His House of Prayer; but that his son Solomon, who was to be King after him, should be a peaceful man, and he should be allowed to do it.



David was sad, when he heard this; but he knew that he did not deserve to have the honour of building the house, so he bowed in token of submission.

And he tried to make Solomon a good young man; and gave him many good rules, for the time when he should be King.

And David was old; and he died.

And Solomon, and all the people mourned for him many days.

## SOLOMON.

SOLOMON, David's son, was a wise King. He did a great many wise things, which made his people comfortable and happy.

Now that the Philistines were quite conquered, Solomon had all the towns on the sea-coast; and he built ships, and sent them

to distant countries, to fetch all sorts of beautiful things for the Temple, which he could not get in Canaan.

But almost everything that he wanted, did grow, or could be found, in Canaan, or the countries close by.

The King of Tyre, who lived near, sent him quantities of cedar-trees, which were split up into boards, and smelt sweetly a long time; and he also sent numbers of clever workmen, to teach Solomon's workmen how to make the ornaments of precious stones, and gold and silver, for the Temple.

At last, after many, many years' hard labour, the Temple was quite finished; and it was the most beautiful building that had ever been seen.

The people all came with joy, and brought

their finest lambs and cows, and first-fruits, corn, wine, and oil, and all that they thought best and most precious of its kind, to offer on the beautiful new altar in Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah: and they all assembled in the great large open courts of the Temple, to see Solomon and the Priests offer them for the first time.

Solomon made a solemn and beautiful prayer to God; entreating Him to favour this new House of Prayer that His people had built. And all the people cried "Amen." They knew well, Solomon said, that God could not dwell in a house made with hands, like the idols of the nations round them: but they hoped, that when His chosen people came humbly there to pray to Him, He would hear; and when He heard, would forgive them their faults and sins.

From that day, the people came three times a year, from all parts of Canaan, to keep the feasts.

One of the greatest feasts was the Pass-over.

Then, every man, and every woman, and child above twelve years old, that could possibly leave home, went up to Jerusalem to pray, and offer their little tributes of thankfulness, for the deliverance of their fathers from Egyptian bondage; after the awful night when the Angel of GOD destroyed the first-born in every house of the Egyptians, but passed over those on whose doors was the blood of the lamb. And they rejoiced, too, in the gift to themselves of the beautiful Land of Promise, in which they were now living so comfortably.

After a while, the people began to forget that these lambs, and cows, and corn, which they brought and burned, were not the most valuable things they had to give.

It was become very easy for them to spare the one lamb, and the one ox, and the few ears of corn, from their plentiful flocks and fields. It was not like Abel's firstling from his one small flock; nor even like Cain's ear of corn from his few small fields. But there was something they possessed, which it was much more difficult for them to give up to God.

Something, without which, Cain's corn had found no acceptance. Something, which the poorest child, who had not even a turtle-dove to bring to the altar, could have brought; and something which would have been more welcome there! What was it?

Whenever the people broke any of the numerous laws Moses had given them, relating to their property, and mode of worship, and so on, they brought these doves, and lambs, and goats, for the Priests to kill, to show before all their friends and brethren that they were sorry for having broken the laws: and with these things the LORD was satisfied. But if it was one of the great Ten Commandments that had been broken, all the lambs and goats in the world were of no avail, without this one thing, which they all possessed, and were all, too often, unwilling to give.

What was it? It was the HEART! It was so difficult in times of trial, to love the LORD their God with all their hearts, and souls, and strength, to love Him so much,

that they could do anything and everything, and bear anything and everything, that He commanded; whether it seemed at first pleasant or unpleasant! It is difficult for *us* to do it; and so we can tell why the Israelites, even after all the wonderful things that were done for them, so often forgot to bring their hearts and their wills with them, when they brought their lambs to the altar.

Even in King Solomon's time, there were Prophets sent from God, to warn the people that they would not be allowed to stay in this land, which they loved so much, if they were not obedient. Yet Solomon himself worshipped idols before he died.

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At last Solomon was very old ; and he died.

Then the people, who had already begun to do wrong, in worshipping idols, began to do still further wrong, and to forget that they were all brethren ; and they quarrelled about who should be King next.

Some wished for Rehoboam, Solomon's son ; and these were the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

The rest of the tribes wished for a man named Jeroboam ; and these ten parted from Judah and Benjamin, and called Jeroboam King of Israel.

Then Rehoboam called himself King of Judah ; and from that time there were sad quarrels between the two kingdoms and their Kings.

Jeroboam was afraid, that as Jerusalem



and the Temple were in the land of Judah, if the people of Israel (as they called themselves), went up to the Temple every year, as usual, to the feasts, they might forsake him, and call Rehoboam their King.

So he would not let any one go to the Temple.

He made images of Baal and other false Gods, and set them up on high hills, and planted groves of trees round them, as the idolaters did ; and thus, by degrees, the ten tribes forgot all about the Temple and the Only True God.

Many Prophets came among them ; and tried to warn them in time, to turn from their evil ways, before worse came upon them : but the foolish people and their wicked Kings would not listen ; and only tried to kill the troublesome monitors.

Then the Prophets fled into wild desert places, to save their lives.

Once, when there was a terrible famine in the land, one of them was fed by ravens, which brought him meat every day; and he drank water from a brook near him. Another time, the same Prophet, whose name was Elijah, asked a poor widow woman to give him some bread. The widow said she had hardly any left, and she, and her little boy were starving to death. Elijah told her, that if she would give him some of what she had left, the LORD would take care of her, and her little store of meal should last till the rain came. She gave him some of the last cake she had. Elijah went into her house, to stay; and as long as he stayed, that cake never was used up, there was

always some left when they had eaten enough each day. But a little while after this, the widow's son died ; and she was very sad.

Then Elijah, to comfort her, and to make her some return for her great kindness to him, when she was so poor herself, prayed to God to allow the life to return to the child. And the LORD heard his prayer, and the child lived again ; and Elijah gave him back to his mother, and she was glad.

At length the ten tribes grew so very wicked, that the Prophets told them they would soon be turned out of their land ; as Moses had foretold what would happen, if they worshipped wood and stone.

Shortly after, a King of a distant country called Assyria, heard what a beautiful land Canaan was ; and he came with a great

army, and besieged Samaria, the town where the King of Israel lived.

The rest of the ten tribes lived mostly in tents ; so that they could easily move away from an enemy.

The King of Assyria, whose name was Shalmanezar, soon conquered the wicked King and his people ; for bad men are almost always cowards ; and he carried them off, prisoners, or captives, as the Bible calls them, to his country, where he made slaves of them.

He left a number of his own people to live in the beautiful land of Canaan, who were idolaters ; and there were very few of the Israelites left, except very poor people.

Probably, when they were working hard, and treated as slaves by the Assyrians, they

wished they had listened to the words of the Prophets ; and thought, if they once got back to their own country, how careful they would be to keep the laws of the GOD who was so merciful and long-suffering, but who was also so powerful to punish their obstinacy. But they never came back to say so ; and now Judah and Benjamin were left to be the Chosen People in the Land of Promise.

## JUDAH.

THE Kings of Judah had not been much better, in most things, than the Kings of Israel ; but still, the Temple had helped to keep them in mind of the One True GOD ; and they never had worshipped wood and stone in the way the ten tribes had done.

But the Kings of Assyria had now found

out that Canaan was worth having; and one of them, named Sennacherib, soon came to try to conquer Jerusalem, and get all the rich things which they had heard of, as being in the Temple.

Then the King of Judah and his people were very much afraid; and they prayed to God to help them.

The Assyrian army came and pitched their tents close to Jerusalem. And King Hezekiah and his people could see from their walls a countless number of men, horses, and chariots, with all their swords and bows and spears glittering in the sun-light.

Evening came; and King Hezekiah sent for a prophet called Isaiah; and begged him to pray to God to help His people.

Hezekiah confessed that he had often done

wrong, but he hoped to be forgiven ; and he would try to do better, and make his people better, if GOD would only help him to conquer the fearful army that lay at the gates.

Isaiah bade him be comforted ; and wait to see what the morning would bring. And Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed in the night.

When the morning dawn came, the King of Judah and his people looked out towards the camp of the Assyrians. But they saw no one moving.

They listened ; but there was not a sound to be heard, not even a horse stirring.

They went nearer, to look.

And they saw soldiers, and their horses, captains, and their servants, lying motionless, on the ground.

They were dead !

For the Angel of the LORD had passed over the camp in the night. And the King of Assyria had waked, and seen his soldiers dying around him, and he had risen up, and fled away home.

The King of Judah and his people rejoiced and gave praises to God for their deliverance.

#### BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY.

By the destruction of the host of Sennacherib King of Assyria, the kingdom of Judah was saved for a time from the fate of the ten tribes.

But after the death of Hezekiah, there were many bad Kings in Judah; and they led their people into idolatry.

They actually forgot that there was such a thing as a Book of the Laws, which Moses



had given the people, by which to rule themselves and their property.

The book was found accidentally by a King named Josiah; and when he heard read aloud to him all the fearful punishments denounced against those who disobeyed these Laws, he was much afraid.

He tried all he could to stop the idolatry of his people, and to make them obey the Laws; but they had been too long accustomed to have their own way, and when Josiah was killed in battle against the Egyptians, they went back to their old habits of wickedness.

And a Prophet named Jeremiah came to warn the people and their Kings.

But they would not listen; they even put him in prison for speaking so boldly.

Jeremiah wrote a book of his prophecies

about the fate of Jerusalem, the beautiful City, the Holy City, that he loved so well; and he wrote lamentations over the sad deeds of his brethren, which were rapidly bringing suffering on all, men, women, and children; innocent as well as guilty.

Then Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, came against Jerusalem; and this time there was no good King Hezekiah to confess his sins, and those of his people, and to promise to do better. And Nebuchadnezzar carried away the bad King, and numbers of his people, and a great many of the beautiful ornaments and vessels of the temple to Babylon.

In a short time he came again; and carried away all the rest of the gold and silver, and every thing that was worth having of that kind; and took all the richest of the

people to be his slaves. He left none at home save the very poorest, of whom he made slaves to till the ground, which once they had called their own, for his captains and servants, who liked Canaan well enough to stay and live there.

The City of Jerusalem, with all its beautiful houses and streets and gates, and Temple, was knocked down; and nothing was left to show how lovely the Temple had been, which Solomon had built with so much care and labour.

Thus the Jews (as the Babylonians called the dwellers in Judea, or the land of Judah), lost the Land of Promise by their own misconduct; and during the terrible weary years of slavery they underwent at Babylon, they had plenty of time to be sorry, and make resolutions for the future.

They remained slaves in Babylon seventy years.

## DANIEL.

WHILE the Jews (as the people were generally called now), lived at Babylon, the idolatrous nations often tried to make them worship wood and stone, as they did.

But most of the Jews felt that they had been severely punished for worshipping any but their *own* God, as they called Him who is above all; and they dared not kneel before images.

They were often treated harshly by their masters, for refusing to do so.

Once, three men were put into a furnace, which was red-hot; to burn them alive for what the Babylonish King called their insolence.

But the fire did not hurt them.

They stood in the midst of it, and sang Psalms and praises to God.

And the Babylonians were astonished and frightened.

And they fetched the men out again; and the King treated them well, as long as he lived; for he said, the God who could save them from the fire was worthy of being worshipped. Often, when he had prayed and sung to his gods, no help came, in the time of trouble; and he wondered to see such wonderful things done by a God of whom there was no image anywhere.

Another King, named Darius, made an order, that everybody in his kingdom should pray to himself; no one was to worship even their images, for thirty days.

The Counsellors who advised him to do this, wanted to get rid of a Jew named Daniel, whom the King trusted. For they knew that Daniel would never kneel down to any but his own God.

At the usual time of prayer, Daniel went up into his own room, to pray. He knew well the order that the King had given. He knew well, that the punishment of disobedience to this order was a cruel death. But Daniel knew also, that even if he died for it, it was better to obey God, rather than men; and he would not, he dared not, worship the King as God; for he was only a man, like himself, after all.

The enemies of Daniel watched him home, and caught him praying, not to the King; and they went and told the King that a man had been found disobeying his orders.

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The King ordered him to be thrown into a den full of hungry lions; and now the bad men thought they had quite got rid of the Jew.

But, though the lions were hungry, they did not attempt to touch Daniel; they came and lay down at his feet.

The next morning, the King, who had loved Daniel and would not have given the order about the worship, if he had thought Daniel could not obey it, came to the hole at the top of the den, to see whether Daniel's God had power to save from what seemed almost certain death to his favourite counsellor.

Daniel heard the King's voice, calling his name; and answered, "Here am I!"

The King could hardly believe his eyes and ears, when he saw Daniel alive, and

heard him speak ; but he had him fetched out directly. Then Daniel told him, how the God whom he worshipped had sent His Messenger, or Angel, to comfort him ; who had power to tame the fierce hungry lions.

Then the King ordered the wicked enemies, who had devised this cruel way of killing Daniel, to be brought and thrown in to the lions. And the lions fell on them, and tore them to pieces directly. And Darius ordered all his subjects to worship the great God of Daniel and all the Jews, who had done such wonders for his faithful servant.

But the people of Darius's country were used to idols ; and they soon forgot his order, and the God whom they could not see.

But Darius the King was always kind to the Jews after this, as long as he lived.



AFTER the Jews had been in captivity seventy years, a King named Cyrus, who had been foretold by the Prophets long before, as their deliverer, allowed them to go back to Jerusalem, to rebuild their City and Temple, and live in their own land again.

Great was the joy of the Jews at hearing this; and Ezra and Nehemiah, two prophets, collected the people, and their goods, and set off with much singing and rejoicings, on the long journey home.

But many of the Jews had married Babylonians, and had got lands and houses in the country of their slavery; and they did not want to go back, and have the trouble of building houses; and they refused to go.

So Ezra left them behind, prophesying that some day they would repent of not serving the true God by rebuilding His Temple.

When the Jews began to rebuild the Temple and the city walls of Jerusalem, those of the poor people who had been left behind by Nebuchadnezzar, joyfully came to help. Among these came also many of the remainder of the ten tribes, whose fathers had been left behind in Samaria, by the King of Assyria, for the same reason—because they were poor. And they, too, remembered that they were descended from Israel; and they were willing and anxious to help in rebuilding the House of Israel's God.

But the Jews repulsed them, and ordered them off; saying that they were not true Israelites, and they were not worthy to help.

Then the people (who were called Samaritans because they lived in what once was the great city of Samaria, the chief city of

the ten tribes), said that they were as good Israelites as any who had come from Babylon. Indeed, they were better; for *they* had never been driven from their own land for their wickedness, as the Jews had been.

This enraged the Jews, and they answered, that the Samaritans were impostors; they had broken the Law of Moses, which forbade an Israelite to marry a heathen woman. For the Samaritans had, almost all of them, married into the families of the Assyrians, who settled in their land.

But though they knew this accusation to be true, they were only the more angry, and from words they got to blows; till at last the Jews built the walls by turns; half the men building, and the other half carrying arms, to protect the works from the Samaritans.

At last, after much vexation and trouble, the city was rebuilt, and the new Temple finished.

The Jews were poor now, and they could not get half so many beautiful things together, to make the Temple, as Solomon and his father had done.

But they did all they could ; and the young men and maidens danced for joy, and sang, as they danced round it, joyful Psalms, about the real Temple they had now of their own, in the old place on Mount Moriah, in the old city of Jerusalem, of which their fathers had told them so many tales.

For these youths were too young to remember the old Jerusalem ; they had all been born at Babylon.

But the old men, who could remember the

splendid Temple of Solomon, and all the crowds that used in olden times to fill its courts with rich offerings, at the yearly feasts, were grieved when they saw so small a house, and so few worshippers in its courts; and they sat apart from the young men and maidens, and wept.

For they remembered that it was the disobedience of themselves and their fathers, which had prevented that old Temple standing even until now, in its pride and beauty; and they knew, that though their punishment had been heavy, it was deserved.

The Prophets comforted them, and said that the glory of this second Temple should be greater than that of Solomon's. But the old men could not understand their dark sayings.

NEHEMIAH, the prophet, was determined to make the people obedient to all the laws of Moses, now that they were come back to their own land.

These laws were very many, and very troublesome to remember and to keep; so that the priests had plenty to do in killing lambs and bulls, and burning different offerings, which Moses had commanded the people to bring whenever they had broken the laws.

In Babylon the people had found it impossible to keep the smaller laws; and they grumbled at Nehemiah's strictness now.

But he turned out of the city every one who disobeyed him.

Amongst these was a man named Manasseh, who was the son of the High-priest.

The Old Testament says very little more about the Jews; nor does it say how Manasseh tried to revenge himself upon the Prophet Nehemiah, for expelling him from Jerusalem.

But the Jews remained in their own country nearly four hundred years longer.

I have found a little account of their doings in other books; and here it is for you. It will help you to understand what is said in the New Testament about the Jews and Samaritans who lived at the time of the birth of OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

When Manasseh was turned out, he went to Samaria and consulted with the Israelite Samaritans how he could best revenge himself on Nehemiah.

Nehemiah would not let the Samaritans

come to worship in the Temple. He was afraid they would soon entice his little flock to break the Laws again, if once he let them in.

So Manasseh professed to be anxious to have a temple to the true GOD; and he made out, too, that the Mount Moriah could not be the right hill for the Temple to be built upon, or the LORD would not have allowed the idolaters to destroy it.

And he persuaded the Samaritans and discontented Jews to help him; and they made a kind of temple at the top of Mount Gerizim, close to Samaria, on which, when Joshua led the Israelites first into the Land, some of the priests had stood, to read aloud parts of the Laws of Moses.

From this time the two temples were



rivals; and many sad quarrels took place between those who ought to have remembered they were all brethren.

The quarrels ran so high, that in a few years time no Jew would speak to a Samaritan, nor would a Samaritan give so much as a cup of cold water to a Jew.

The Jews rapidly increased in numbers, but the Samaritan family never spread over much country; so that the tribes of Judah and Benjamin now took for themselves nearly all the country, once occupied by the rest of the families of the sons of Israel.

## MACCABEES.

MANY Kings of different neighbouring countries conquered the Jews, at different times, but they were never carried away again into captivity.

Sometimes the Kings let the Jews go on with their own laws peaceably. Sometimes they forbade them to carry on their religious rites.

One King of Syria oppressed them so much that the Jews could bear it no longer; and one brave family, called Maccabeus, fought against the cruel King, one after another, till the father and nearly all the sons were slain.

But one of them, named Judas Maccabeus, conquered the King of Syria, and set the worship at the Temple going as usual, and so it continued, with a few short interruptions, till the most wonderful thing in all the history of the Jews happened, at a time when the Romans were their masters.

But I must go back a little, to explain to

you, that many of the prophets, who had come among the Jews at different times, to warn them of punishments for disobedience, or to comfort them in trouble, had spoken of a wonderful Prophet that was to come, who was to be the last of their race.

There were to be no more Prophets after he came.

This Prophet they sometimes spoke of as King, sometimes as Prince; and they gave him many glorious names, signifying that he was to be a much greater Prophet than any that had gone before him. He was to rule over the Jews; over Judah and Benjamin, and all Israel; and over all the world; and to do many other powerful things.

No Prophet told so much about him as Isaiah.

When the neighbouring Kings conquered the Jews after their return from captivity, the people longed for this Prince to come and free them.

Some thought that Judas Maccabeus was he; but then, Isaiah had said distinctly, that this great Prophet was to be a descendant of David the son of Jesse; and that he would be born at Bethlehem. And this could not be said of Judas.

Judas died; and Hyrcanus, another wise King, came to reign; and now the time so darkly hinted at by the Prophet Daniel, seemed near; but no Prince arose.

Then Judea was conquered by the Romans; and now every one hoped and waited, and waited and hoped for the Prince.

The mothers, whose little boys were born

at Bethlehem, fondly watched them, each thinking her own boy might be the King that should come.

But no grand person came; and the Jews mourned in silence.

The Jews were so very anxious to have a King who should set up their kingdom again, that they talked themselves into a firm belief that this Prophet would be like Solomon or David; and have great houses, and beautiful lands, and quantities of rich clothing, and plenty of servants to wait on him.

And they delighted in thinking, how, when once their Prince was come from God, they would rule the Gentiles, as they called the heathen nations, with a rod of iron, to repay them for all their own long bondage.

They quite thought that their God only

cared for them, His "Chosen People," as they proudly called themselves. They forgot, in their pride, that they had been "Chosen" only to keep His NAME in remembrance, and that they had little to boast of, in their history, of how well they had kept their trust.

If they had read the writings of the Prophets a little more attentively, they might have found many hints, that the Prince was to be neither rich in money, nor powerful like earthly Kings, with rich lands, and servants, and armies.

But they were too full of their own hopes of power and riches and revenge, to see what was written about the Gentiles, as well as themselves, seeing His light, and trusting in Him, in peace and love.

At last the long-expected Messenger from God, the "Chosen," the "Sent," the "MESSIAH," as they called him in their language, was born. And they received him not.

His name was JESUS.

THE END.





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